

Bennie H. Reynolds III / Armin Lange /
Eric M. Meyers / Randall Styers (Eds.)

Light Against Darkness

Dualism in Ancient Mediterranean
Religion and the Contemporary World

Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements

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Edited by
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Volume 2

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Introduction

In the summer of 2003, the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Department of Religion at Duke University organized an international symposium entitled “Light against Darkness: Dualism in Ancient Mediterranean Religion and the Contemporary World.” Because of the far-ranging nature of the subject matter of the symposium, many of the participants came into contact with issues and methods that were quite far removed from their own field of specialization. For example, the presentation of Prods Oktor Skjærvø on “Zoroastrian Dualism” was particularly illuminating for many of the participants. Skjærvø explained how little is actually known about “Persian-period” dualism of the Achaemenid era and especially how tentative and inexact the dating of the most important Persian texts remains. This presentation vividly illustrated how a single scholarly paper can challenge time-honored and deeply-shared conceptions of religious history.

This volume took a long time in editing. The delays are mainly due to personal circumstances of members of its editorial team. A transatlantic move by a key member of the editorial team, a tenure procedure in regard to another key member, and new administrative responsibilities for most of us caused longer delays than we could have imagined.

Before introducing the reader to the topic of this volume, we would like offer a few brief words of gratitude to the many students and colleagues who helped to make the meeting such a success. Professors Thomas Tweed and Bart Ehrman of UNC-Chapel Hill supported us especially during the early stages of organizing the conference. The symposium would never have been possible without the logistical and administrative assistance of Hope Toscher of UNC. Graduate student assistants at Chapel Hill also provided invaluable service, especially Jared Anderson who assisted at the conference and then later helped both in editing many of these articles and in insuring the accuracy of foreign-language text in the volume. At Duke the conference was facilitated by Gay Trotter, staff assistant to the Graduate Program in Religion, other members of the staff of the Department of Religion, and Professor Steve Chapman of Duke Divinity School. When we came to compile and edit this volume, Prods Oktor Skjærvø made the valuable suggestion of including the article from Werner Sundermann and translated it into English himself.

We are especially obliged to the sponsors of our conference. UNC's former Senior Associate Dean Darryl Gless provided the seed money for our meeting. Additional funds were provided at UNC by Associate Provost Steve Allred and the Department of Religious Studies. At Duke University, we benefited from the financial support of the Center for Jewish Studies, the Department of Religion, and the Trinity College of Arts and Sciences. We are also indebted to Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht and the editors of the series *Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements* (Armin Lange, Bernard M. Levinson, and Vered Noam) for accepting this volume for publication. The staff of Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, particularly its senior acquisitions editor Jörg Persch and Mr. Christoph Spill, supported the publication of this volume in exemplary fashion. It is also a great pleasure for us to thank each of the authors for their scholarly contributions to this volume.

On a formal note, we should also mention that the British and American spellings of the volume's articles have not been harmonized, since we have preferred to allow each author's essay to be reproduced in the way it was originally presented.

The Appeal of Dualism

Although all participants of the conference "Light against Darkness" were well aware of the breadth of our topic and its far-reaching implications, the conference itself proved that we still underestimated our topic. The juxtaposition of scholarship concerning dualism in the contemporary world with the study of dualism in the religious context of antiquity turned out to be far more fruitful and more challenging than we expected. This juxtaposition made it abundantly clear that dualism cannot be understood solely within religious frameworks, but must be contextualized in far broader social dynamics.

The term "dualism" was fashioned by Thomas Hyde at the turn of the eighteenth century to describe Zoroastrianism.¹ "Dualism" is thus an early modern descriptive term pointing toward religious and philosophical concepts or frameworks. Though the term is modern, the phenomenon of dualism itself has been prominent since the earliest stages of human culture. While monistic and pluralistic modes of thought have often been socially important, the binary oppositions of various dualisms—good and bad, light and darkness, eschatological bliss and contemporary suffering, transcendence and immanence, mind and body, heaven and earth—have had broad appeal throughout human history, and they persist into the modern world, even shaping contemporary political and ethical debates.

¹ Thomas Hyde, *Historia Religionis veterum Persarum eorumque Magorum* (Oxford: Sheldon, 1700).

In contemporary parlance, the notion of dualism designates a tendency to classify phenomena into opposing groups. Dualist thought has provided one of the most pervasive conceptual grids through the history of human culture. Dualist frameworks are appealing because they offer a readily available and easily comprehensible scheme for mapping the world. But binary oppositions should not be underestimated as “the easy way out” in epistemology. Various theorists have argued that dualist bifurcations reflect a fundamental condition of cogniscent beings, the division between the perceiving subject and the object that is perceived. Dualist oppositions thus reflect a formative distinction between the individual and the other. Ancient cultures offer vivid examples of the dynamics through which this basic differentiation between the self and the other can be expanded to apply to broader cosmic wholes. So, for example, in ancient Egypt the non-Egyptian world was understood as the negative realm of Seth and the barbarians—a thought pattern that reappears in classical Greek culture and many other cultural contexts.

The foundational role of dualism as a mechanism of human perception and cognition explains both the prominence of dualisms in the history of thought and also their great variations. The number of possible binary oppositions is infinite. This range of possible dualisms cautions against attempts to create a descriptive list of basic dualist structures (cosmological, temporal, spatial, ethical, anthropological, psychological, ontological, etc.). While such classifications can be descriptively useful, they fall short of the infinite number of possible dichotomies. The present volume thus refrains from structuring its articles according to various forms of dualism but prefers instead an historical sequence.

Yet while dualistic conceptions of reality are pervasive in human thought and culture, they are not unavoidable or necessarily desirable. On the contrary, dualism can often serve to suppress human possibility by channeling multiplicity into narrowly prescribed binarisms. Even basic physics demonstrates how misleading dualist grids of perception can be—the atom does not consist of two categories of particles but three (positron, neutron, and electron). The contributions to this volume addressing contemporary philosophical critiques of dualism emphasize the difficulties entailed in attempting to move beyond the strictures of dualism, but they also underscore the conceptual and social value of that effort.

Light against Darkness – Dualism between Antiquity and Modernity

The modern critique of dualism has been fueled in large part by the increasingly pluralistic (and thus non-dualist) realities of the contemporary world. But this very pluralism can also provoke new modes of binary political thinking. Recent decades have also witnessed a revitalization of

religious dualisms, illustrated most vividly by bellicose forms of religious fundamentalism. These modern political and religious dualisms are closely interconnected, and their social dangers are readily apparent.

The modern proclivity toward dualism reflects a dynamic that is well known to scholars of Persian and Hellenistic antiquity. The Persian Empire internationalized the ancient world on an unprecedented scale without imposing its culture on conquered populations. Hellenistic civilization, in contrast, assimilated a range of cultures into the Hellenistic cultural continuum, creating a new pluralistic society under an ecumenical Greek umbrella that spread over much of the civilized Western world. The rapid creation of this multicultural, pluralistic society dominated by Greek culture often resulted in cultural alienation and estrangement. This alienation produced new religious needs and made spiritual and philosophical dualisms attractive to many communities.

From the beginning of Hellenism, an underlying feeling of cultural dislocation marked the Hellenistic world and might even explain the rise of Christianity. In Judaism, for example, the steadily increasing popularity of apocalypticism can be understood as a response to this general sense of alienation and the cultural pressures exerted by Hellenism. When the so-called Hellenistic religious reforms of the years 175–164 B.C.E. threatened the existence of Judaism by way of enforced Hellenization, apocalyptic thought responded with an emphasis on cosmological and temporal dualisms as documented by the dualistic cosmologies and eschatologies of the Book of Daniel, the Enochic *Book of Dreams* (1 Enoch 83–90), and the *Teaching of the Two Spirits* (1QS III:13–IV:26). The Qumran community itself offers a rich example of how these dualisms continued to influence Judaism long after the original crisis had subsided, since Qumran rejected anyone outside the boundaries of its community as sons of darkness. Through late antiquity, dualistic religions were hugely popular, as exemplified by various Gnostic religions, Mandeism, Manicheism, and Jewish hekhalot mysticism. Yet the Hellenistic kingdoms also mark a zenith of scholarship and philosophy (the famous Museion of Alexandria and its state sponsored scholars and scientists are just one case in point), and these scholarly traditions produced important philosophical challenges to dualism. Thus, for example early Stoicism opposed dualism through its advocacy of a monistic worldview.

No single set of papers can cover the range of dualist thought in a comprehensive manner, so the papers in this volume have two major areas of focus. One is the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern world, which represents not only an important cradle of dualistic thought but also witnessed its Hellenistic flowering. The other focus is the modern world, which has been influenced by ancient dualism but has also produced both

innovative new forms of dualistic thinking and important philosophical critique of binary logic. The contributions to this volume illustrate not only how changes in the socio-religious and philosophical structure of a culture can produce new modes of dualistic thought but also how established dualist and dualistic traditions are transformed in response to such changes. And, of course, contemporary dualisms can draw on ancient ones without necessarily reflecting them accurately. In some cases recent dualist binaries draw on earlier sources, while in others they develop independently in response to new social and religious circumstances.

The contributions to this volume focused in antiquity illustrate both how dualistic worldviews can exert mutual influence and how they can evolve independently. *P. Kyle McCarter* observes in his contribution a long tradition of dialectical dualisms in the ancient Near East. The shift towards a predominance of eschatological dualism in the second half of the second millennium B.C.E. in Egypt and in early Israel was caused not so much by the influence of Persian dualistic thought as by growing imperial pressure from the East, especially the Persian Empire. Earlier tensions between the people of Egypt and Israel and their respective neighbors was a productive tension (complementary or dialectical dualism, as McCarter frames it), but the second half of the first millennium saw new tendencies to demonize the Other. As McCarter states, “Dualism became predominantly eschatological in the region, unable to maintain the creative tension of the complementary systems of the past, and the ideal of living in creative tension with the Other was replaced by the anticipation of his obliteration.”²

Sydney Aufrère focuses his analysis on Egyptian religion in the early Ptolemaic period. Aufrère argues that the emphatic dualism of traditional Egypt was masked in the work of Manetho of Sebennytus but continued to persist in a more subtle form. The example of Manetho illustrates how the native intellectual elite of Hellenistic Egypt could apply longstanding dualistic hermeneutics to Greek and Egyptian religious myths in a way that produced new formulations of both.

The dynamism of ancient dualism is also evident as *Prods Oktor Skjærvø* describes Iranian dualism and traces its development from the old *Avesta* up to the period of Islamic rule. In an extensive appendix to his article, Skjærvø demonstrates that the transmission history of Zoroastrianism makes it impossible to reconstruct Zoroaster’s thought and raises significant questions about scholarly reconstructions of Persian religion in the Achaemenid period. The Zoroastrian texts themselves contain little historical data—the Iranians did not know “objective” history of the type that developed in Greece. More than a thousand years of oral transmission makes the

² See P. Kyle McCarter, 35.

use of the *Gâthâs* as well as *Old* and *Young Avesta* highly problematic in attempting to reconstruct pre-Sassanid Zoroastrian thought. In addition, scholarly reconstructions are often highly influenced by the Judeo-Christian ethical tradition. Using such reconstructions of Zoroaster's message and the resulting Zoroastrian theology of the pre-Sassanid era in seeking to identify assumed Zoroastrian features in other Near Eastern religions—most prominently in Judaism—is all the more problematic as the Young Avestan language cannot have been well understood in late Achaemenid times (Old Avestan probably not at all).

Eric Meyers highlights the prominence of dualism in the Hebrew Bible. Israelite cosmology employs various elements of Ancient Near Eastern (especially Canaanite) mythology whose conceptions of “bad” and “darkness” are colored by dualistic presuppositions. The mythological roots of Israelite dualism were transformed into apocalyptic dualism under the influence of Zoroastrian thought, likely transmitted through other ancient Near Eastern cultures. In the Hellenistic period after the closure of the unofficial canon (Torah and *Neviim*) at the beginning of the second century B.C.E., Jewish dualism was again transformed as Greek philosophy and anthropology fed into Jewish philosophical dualism (exemplified by Philo of Alexandria) and changed Jewish ideas of resurrection in Rabbinic thought.

Patrick L. Miller examines Plato's distinctive combination of a psychological mind-body dualism with a cosmology that held monism and dualism in ambivalent tension. Plato bifurcates the human being into good and bad parts, identifying the self with reason and thus alienating it from the body. This concept of the supremacy of pure thought was influenced by Zoroastrianism and the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. Plato's segregation of pure thought away from material reality served an eschatological monism in assimilating the philosopher's self to the cosmic order—the Form of Forms—that is the Good. On the one hand, material objects cannot exist independent of Form, otherwise the cosmic unity guaranteed by the Form of Forms is compromised. On the other hand, material objects cannot be illusions either, because if only the perfect unity of the Forms existed, nothing could cause such illusions. To achieve unity with the divine Form of Forms, Plato devised a program of purification and divinization. The fundamental outlines of this program are Pythagorean, but it is influenced by the Milesians and Anaxagoras, Parmenides and Heraclitus, even the Sophists and Hippocratics. Humans are conceived as hybrids of stable reason above and the body with its motions below, and the cosmos as known by reasoning is distinguished from the cosmos as perceived through human senses. The philosopher should strive to purify divine reason from its association with human and mortal limitations.

Loren Stuckenbruck considers the degree to which dualistic concepts are coordinated with an understanding of human nature in four Jewish texts from the second century B.C.E.: (1) Ben Sira; (2) *1 Enoch* 91–105 (esp. 91:1–10 and the so-called *Epistle of Enoch*); (3) *Musar le-Mevin* (also designated *Instruction* from Qumran Caves 1 and 4); and (4) the “Teaching on the Two Spirits” preserved in the Qumran *Community Rule* (1QS III:13–IV:26). Stuckenbruck argues that dualistic structures of thought played an important role in demarcating the identities of groups who saw themselves in religious conflict with either the conventionally wicked or with specific opponents. Ethical, cosmological, and anthropological dualisms were developed and deployed for this purpose, often in combination. The most elaborate conjunction of these three types of dualisms can be found in the *Treatise of the Two Spirits*. This text provided both the original community of the *Treatise of the Two Spirits* and, later, the Essenes with a theological framework that enabled them to come to terms with discordance between their religious ideologies and social identities on the one hand and their experience on the other.

Philip S. Alexander explores heaven and earth dualism as a special type of cosmological dualism through his study of sample texts from the *Book of Watchers*, *Sefer Yeşirah*, *Heikhalot Rabbati*, *2 Enoch*, and *3 Enoch*, written over a period of approximately 1000 years. This dualistic tradition sees heaven as a parallel universe to earth. Reality is divided into two parallel worlds, which operate according to different physical laws. Movement between these worlds is possible only by way of physical transformation (apotheosis and incarnation). Heaven is understood either as a mono-elemental universe made of fire or as a multi-elemental one with primordial, antithetical elements eternally juxtaposed. Although the different formulations of heaven and earth binarism in ancient Judaism point to dynamic dualist thought, Alexander nevertheless observes an element of longstanding stability in this tradition. “The clearest examples I could find of the parallel-universe idea come, curiously, from the beginning and the end of the tradition, from some of the earliest layers of the Enochic corpus on the one hand and from the *Heikhalot* literature on the other.”³

Fred Horton portrays earliest Christianity—the Christianity of the New Testament—as deeply dualistic in two case studies from Mark 10:2–12 and 1 Cor 6:10–20. Both passages address questions of human behavior, but their ethical and legal arguments do not support behavioral instruction. Instead, the two texts confront their audiences with novel dualistic structures. For Mark, a cognitive dualism exists between Jesus and the mass of humanity. Even the disciples stand in juxtaposition to Jesus, given their

³ Philip S. Alexander, 178.

uncertainty and anxiety concerning his mission. The experience of the kingdom is fearful, and Jesus' basic message is deeply ambiguous for his followers. For Paul, the spirit dwells within the Christian's own body, but it also serves to alienate the believer from that body. The Christian initiate lives in a profound, unresolved dualistic tension.

Through his study of the *Apocryphon of John*, Zlatko Pleše describes Gnosticism as an ethically oriented cosmic dualism. Gnosticism avoids a dualistic deadlock, first, through subsuming the primal dichotomy of ontological principles under the higher category of an all-encompassing principle of unity and, second, through the intercession of a third intermediary cause operating at the cosmological and anthropological levels. "Soul" as this mediating entity partakes in both the intelligible and sensible realms. The three basic levels of the Gnostic universe—intelligible or spiritual, animate, and fleshly or material—are the product of a respective pair of gendered male and female principles considered as simultaneously opposite and complementary. The male principle provides form and the female principle contributes matter to creation. Sophia, the universal Soul of the Gnostics, strives to unite with her consort Christ to return to her lost home in the spiritual realm, but remains at the same time imprisoned in the visible world of Ialdabaoth. Similarly, in soul, the Spirit of Life coming from Sophia fights with the Counterfeit Spirit of Death coming from Ialdabaoth.

Two further articles explore Manicheism as antiquity's most dualistic religion. *Prods Oktor Skjærvø* provides an invaluable overview of Manichean dualistic mythology in an appendix to the essay by *Werner Sundermann*. Sundermann himself discusses Manicheism as the most radical dualistic religion of antiquity (even in comparison to Zoroastrianism and Gnosticism). In his article, Sundermann offers the first bridge to modernity. As the most radical form of ancient dualism, Manichean dualism haunts the general conscience and judgment of people to the present day. These Manichean traces are at best a distorted reflection of ancient Manicheism, persisting largely through the anti-Manichean polemics of the former Manichean Augustine and other Christian polemicists. Through Augustine's influence, the term Manichean has become a negative term in current political discourse, designating harsh and divisive binary thinking. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term Manichean was sometimes used to characterize merciless profiteering, and even this connotation had its roots in Augustine's polemic against the Manichean prohibition on giving alms to anyone but the Manichean elect. Beyond these negative traces, Sundermann also identifies a positive, but comparably distorted, adaptation of Manicheism in Anthroposophistic Christology, which again derives from themes found in Augustine.

John C. Reeves studies a special aspect of Manicheism as antiquity's most dualistic religion, the Manichean use of scripturalism to disseminate dualistic thought. The seven books authored by Mani were intended to serve as a scriptural canon for his religion, and the Manichean church placed great importance on their accurate preservation and reproduction. Reeves examines Mani's counter-history to Genesis 1–6 in order to explore how Mani rewrote (pre)canonical Jewish texts to create his own canon of scriptures and to promulgate his dualistic message.

Piet F. M. Fontaine offers a second bridge between ancient and modern dualisms. Fontaine is less skeptical than Sundermann concerning the influence of ancient dualism on the dualisms of modernity. Fontaine uses the examples of imperialism and Gnosticism to trace the history of dualism in search of historical cohesion. Imperialism is paradigmatic of how a monistic structure can generate dualisms. From the first Mesopotamian empires through the early modern colonial ones, the resistance of subjected nations gave rise to political dualisms. Gnosticism is also paradigmatic, both because it still persists in its Mandaean branch and because of its distinctive form of two-world dualism. Fontaine claims that Gnostic dualistic thought has influenced all three monotheistic world religions. He sees Shiite cosmology as Gnostic and argues that the Syrian Nusairi-Alawites are an Islamic-Gnostic sect. He finds Gnostic elements manifest in the Jewish Kabbalah, and he finds examples of Christian Gnosticism in communities such as the Cathars and German mysticism. Fontaine also regards New Age religion as fundamentally Gnostic.

The articles examining more recent formulations of dualism illustrate both the influence of ancient dualism on modern dualistic thought and also the development of novel new dualistic conceptions in changed social and religious circumstances. *Kalman Bland* explores how human-animal dualism can find comparable expressions in the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 1 and the book of Qohelet), in medieval thought, and in the responses to Darwin's evolutionary theory in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. As these examples illustrate, human-animal dualism can be used either to demonstrate basic differences between humans and animals or to create important notions of hierarchy. As Bland explains, "The semantic oscillation between difference and antagonism, fueled by contested notions of hierarchy and privilege, seems to obtain in other forms of dualism, as well."⁴ The book of Qohelet acknowledges the differences between humans and animals, but their shared fate of death serves to level those differences. In Genesis 1, human priority is established through being created in the image of God, an omnivorous diet, and the dominion of the earth. In medieval Jewish

⁴ Kalman Bland, 282.

thought, the cosmological separation of mind and body combined with an epistemological dualism to confirm humanity's superiority over animals. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century Darwin's evolutionary comparison of humans with animals provoked religious declarations concerning the fundamental ontological differences between humans and animals.

Rodney S. Sadler examines the role of dualistic thought in relation to questions of race and racism in the United States. Sadler shows how three early African American exegetes of the Bible developed their interpretation of biblical texts in response to the racially motivated dualistic interpretative strategies of white supremacists. In the texts of Robert B. Lewis (1844), Rufus L. Perry (1893), and Fleming Aytes (1927), hermeneutics were influenced by a dualistic opposition of "racial" types—exegesis became a matter of black and white. Sadler establishes a general acceptance-reversal paradigm that underscores the dualistic aspect of this exegetical tradition. Early African American exegetes utilized the problematic theses of their ideological opponents to reach conclusions diametrical opposed to the Eurocentric hermeneutics of white supremacists. But African American exegetes do not simply invert the racial hierarchy; "their end was a world of parity and universal equality, which differs starkly from the supremacists' exclusivist ethnocentric ideal."⁵

For *Yaakov Ariel*, the pervasive dualistic ideology shaping contemporary American evangelical Christianity has its roots in a deep sense of America's (precarious and violated) superiority as a chosen nation: "dualistic evangelical values and beliefs have taken hold in America of the twenty-first century because they have fit so easily with long-standing American beliefs and the desire of many Americans to retain or regain their sense of righteousness and mission."⁶ Contemporary evangelicalism reinforces the belief that America is not an ordinary nation but an exceptional, chosen one. Moral human beings are bound to succeed within the American system; dissenters and misfits must be removed as saboteurs. The uniformity of suburban consumer culture itself provides a fertile breeding-ground for the promulgation of dualism.

Michael A. Rosenthal explores the metaphysical and theological assumptions that govern the critical reception of the philosophy of Benedict de Spinoza. Rosenthal identifies a pervasive dualist discomfort with Spinoza's metaphysical monism as well as Spinoza's notion of divine immanence. Spinoza's critics have been motivated by antipathy both to his sociological account of the origin and function of religion and to his challenge to traditional understanding of the uniqueness of the Jewish people. Rosenthal

⁵ Rodney S. Sadler, 292.

⁶ Yaakov Ariel, 309.

questions whether the ideas of transcendence and dualism are required in contemporary Jewish thought or whether the tradition can embrace a version of Spinozan monism and immanence. The Torah does not stipulate a dogmatic metaphysics, and aspects of Spinoza's philosophy fit well with Jewish tradition. Theology, Rosenthal concludes, should subordinate metaphysics to broader ethical and social values.

The dualism between transcendence and immanence has played a central role in Western philosophy, and *Randall Styers* examines the important critique of this particular dualistic structure in the recent work of Bruno Latour, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. In late modern culture, the accelerating effects of material and intellectual change give contemporary efforts to move beyond dualism far greater cultural traction. So, for example, the turn towards radical immanence in the thought of Deleuze and Guattari points for Styers towards a new mode of religious thought that does not focus "on an overcoding of transcendence, but on an affirmation of the determinate and the concrete. Perhaps the divine may actually be found within immanent potentiality. At the very least, Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual framework compels us to recognize the multidimensionality and complexity of reality in ways that inevitably denaturalize any static sense of the immanent."⁷

Finally in the volume's last article, *William G. Lycan* reflects on the contemporary plausibility of one particularly important historical binarism, mind-body dualism. Lycan thus exemplifies the type of modern philosophical critique of dualism discussed by Styers. Lycan examines various philosophical positions opposing the monist doctrine of mind-body materialism, the notion that all mental or psychological states are entirely constituted by physical matter. In Lycan's view, the most intellectually viable option for opposing mind-body materialism lies in what he describes as "Weak panpsychism." Panpsychism surmises that every individual object in the universe has mental or psychological properties, an "inner" life of some sort. Although Lycan remains unpersuaded, he considers the state of pure consciousness reached in Buddhists and Hindu meditation as pointing toward a rudimentary mode of consciousness that might be available even to the most rudimentary being. Weak panpsychism might offer a response to materialism.

Through these articles, we see the power and pervasiveness of dualistic thought. Dualism has proved a potent cultural tool for clarifying and ordering reality. Particularly in times of social stress and psychological insecurity, it can offer a valuable conceptual grid that provides orientation to the world and a clear sense of identity. At the same time, though, there are

⁷ Randall Styers, 347.

important questions to be asked about the social effects of binary thinking. As history amply illustrates, dualistic notions can readily be deployed to legitimate cultural demonization and to rationalize violence. At a deeper level, a dualist worldview can also obscure the possibilities to be found in multiplicity.

The editors, Chapel Hill, Durham, and Vienna,

April, 2010

P. Kyle McCarter, Jr.

Dualism in Antiquity

Anthropologists have amply documented a widespread, possibly universal tendency of human societies to view the world in terms of polarities, either with regard to daily experience, or to cosmology, or to both.¹ The former aspect of this tendency (perceived polarities of experience) often shapes social organization. The latter aspect (the cosmology understood according to polarities) has consequences for logic, ethics, and religion. The titles of the papers published in this volume show that our concern is principally with the latter (dualistic philosophies) rather than the former (binary social systems). It would probably even be correct to say that our topic is, more specifically, “religious dualism,” although that expression is sometimes reserved in the social-scientific literature for a particular type of dualistic thought, that which envisions the world as the arena for an unconditional struggle between the principles of Good and Evil, and even more specifically for a struggle that will eventually (and only) be resolved in eschatological time by an unqualified victory of the forces of Good. It will come as no surprise that many of the papers presented here *are* concerned (often focally) with this kind of dualism, since it is found in one form or another in many of the traditions being treated (including Zoroastrianism, apocalyptic Judaism, Gnosticism and Mandaeism, Manichaeism, and certain sectarian theologies in medieval Christianity). These eschatological dualisms, as they are sometimes called, seem to have begun to assert themselves among the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia in the second half of the first millennium B.C.E.

Even so, there were societies in the same region long before that embraced worldviews based on dualistic principles understood more broadly. The polarities that animate and define the world, as perceived by these societies, are utterly opposed or at least opposite, and they are irreducible (that is, they cannot be resolved into a single entity). But they are not always relentlessly hostile, and the goal of history does not envision the ultimate elimination of one or the other, even though they can never be fully reconciled. This broader type of dualism is sometimes characterized as complementary or dialectical, to distinguish it from the eschatological dual-

¹ See, for example, Rodney Needham, *Reconnaissances* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1980).

ism just described. In systems embracing this complementary view, the very separateness of the opposed principles produces a cosmic equilibrium that is the chief characteristic of the experienced world, so that living in such a universe requires recognizing and participating in the harmonious balance inherent in the relationship between the defining polarities. In the space allotted to me I want first to take note of the presence of complementary dualism in antiquity, recognizable already at a very early date, and then to illustrate the increasingly prominent role of eschatological dualism that developed during the second half of the first millennium B.C.E. Finally, I will suggest, schematically and very briefly, some factors that may have contributed to this development.

At the outset, then, let me return to the phenomenon of complementary dualism. Its chief characteristics are often illustrated by appeal to the well-known concept of *yinyang*, which emerged as a principle of East Asian philosophy in the third quarter of the first millennium B.C.E., during the so-called Warring States Period of the Chou Dynasty. It was at this time that *yin* and *yang* came to be thought of as primal cosmic forces, the former negative, weak, and passive, the latter positive, strong, and active. Under the influence of aspects of Confucian and Taoist philosophy, both also achievements of the mid- to late Chou period, the concept of *yinyang* was expanded to embrace a broad range of specific bipolar and interactive phenomena. The essentially passive *yin* was associated with Earth and the moon, and with water, coldness, darkness, and femininity. The active *yang* was linked with Heaven and the sun, and with fire, heat, brightness, and masculinity. The two forces, their bipolarity, and the interaction between them became essential to the language of metaphysics and phenomenology, not to mention science, medicine, etc., so that much later in the official treatises that promulgated the orthodox cosmology of the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644–1912) *yin* and *yang* had come to represent aspects of those things that were most important to the operation of the world, especially the agents of growth, change, and transformation. The creative interaction of *yin* and *yang* is sometimes cooperative but often conflictual. Even so, what Chinese philosophy sought to find in their interaction was cosmic harmony, a balance between the polarities. This is why the concept of *yinyang* is so often referenced to illustrate what I am referring to as complementary or dialectical dualism.

It is not necessary, however, to seek as far afield as East Asia to discover the existence of this type of dualistic thinking. The ancient Mediterranean world provides examples of its own, and in fact the case of pharaonic Egypt is cited in the social-scientific literature almost as often as that of China. Throughout their long history the ancient Egyptians characterized both the world in general and their own territory in particular in dualistic terms. Sky

and Earth were a cosmological pair, expressed mythologically by the picture of Nut, the sky-goddess, separated from and stretched over her brother and consort, Geb, the earth-god. The cosmogonic separation of this pair at the command of the supreme god Re⁴ established the basic dualistic pattern of creation (of existing reality) in Egypt. According to this pattern, as Eberhard Otto, writing in the *Lexikon*, has expressed it, "Every existing whole consists of two complementary opposite pairs [in which] the essence of existence resides."² As is required for truly dualistic thought, the fundamental oppositions implied in Otto's statement are irreducible and uncompromising, as in the ethical and moral dualism expressed by the contrast between *m3't*, "truth," and *isft*, "falsehood, wrongdoing," which appears characteristically in, but is by no means confined to, wisdom literature. But the complementarity of Egyptian dualism is perhaps mostly easily explained with reference to the pervasive geopolitical cosmology.

Egypt itself was "the Two Lands," Upper and Lower Egypt, the Delta and the Nile Valley or, viewed from another perspective, "the Red Land and the Black Land," the surrounding desert and the arable soil of the Nile Valley. That these latter dualities were as much cosmological as geographical (and no less mythological than the Nut-Geb polarity) is shown by the way they are incorporated into the political ideology of Egypt, which was dominated by the all-powerful figure of the king. The king's names and titles are especially indicative. For example, the royal titulary, the five names that the king assumed at his accession, include at least two that refer directly to his sovereignty over the dual land. The second name of the five follows the expression *nbty*, a grammatical dual that means "the two ladies," referring to *Nhbt*, Nekhbet, the vulture goddess of Upper Egypt, and *W3dt*, Wadjet (Edjo), the cobra goddess of Lower Egypt. The fourth name, or prenomen, always follows the title *n-sw-bit*, "he who belongs to the sedge and the bee," where the flowering sedge represents Upper Egypt and the bee Lower Egypt. Both of these names mean, in effect, "ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt." If such names and the sovereignty they assert might seem to refer to Egypt as a mere geographical duality lacking the cosmological dimension that would be required for it to qualify as a cosmologically dualistic sphere, the same cannot be said for other royal titles, such as "the Two Lords," which refers to the king's sovereignty over the two lands through his identification with Horus, the god of Lower Egypt, and Seth, the god of Upper Egypt.

In the mythology of Horus and Seth, the Two Lords were enemies, and their mutual antagonism was the central feature of their relationship, a topic to which I shall return. Even so, the divine pair represents a principle of

² Otto s.v. "Dualismus," *Lex.d.Äg.* 8, 1148.

world order that was central to Egyptian cosmology from a very early date. An indication of the high antiquity of this principle and the dualistic conceptualization of the Egyptian state that it implies is the Pre-Dynastic royal name *hṭp šhmwy*, Hetepsekhemwy, which means “The Two Powers are at peace” (or “...are pleased”), *šhmwy* being a grammatical dual that refers to “the Two Powers” or “Mighty Ones,” (Horus and Seth). Hetepsekhemwy was the first ruler of the Second Dynasty (*ca.* 2890–2686), which, to judge from the state of affairs with the establishment of the Third Dynasty at the beginning of the Old Kingdom, must have been the time when the political foundations of the unified dual monarchical state were laid. Indeed the *last* ruler of the Second Dynasty is sometimes thought of as a principal architect of the centralized state. At the beginning of his reign he called himself *ḥa'šhm*, Khasekhem, which means “The Mighty One [i.e., the Mighty Horus] is crowned,” but after asserting (or reasserting) central control over the two kingdoms he changed his name, evidently symbolically, to *ḥa' šhmwy*, Khasekhemwy, “The *Two* Mighty Ones are Crowned,” writing his name in a *serekh* surmounted by both the falcon that represented Horus and the so-called Typhonean animal that stood for Seth.

If the dualistic nature of the geopolitical cosmology of ancient Egypt is illustrated by the mutual importance of Horus and Seth (and of their relationship), the complementary or dialectical character of this dualism is shown especially clearly by the persistence of Seth's cosmological roles after his defeat by Horus. Horus was among the oldest and most consistently important of the Egyptian gods, and his association with the reigning king was unique (or, to put it in Egyptian terms, the king was the living Horus). Thus Horus was not only the god of Lower Egypt, but in a sense of Upper and Lower Egypt together. He attained to this position of ascendancy by achieving victory in his struggle with the god of Upper Egypt, Seth, who was consequently banished to become the powerful and feared god of the desert and of foreign lands. Seth was not destroyed, however, nor was he going to be. This was no eschatological dualism. The struggle between Horus and Seth was always ongoing in mythological time, and indeed Seth had a continuing and important function in the operation of the cosmos. The clearest example of this may be the central role he plays in the repulsion of '3pp, 'Apep (Apophis), the serpent who attempts to devour the sun on its daily voyage across the sky and through the underworld. In Egyptian art the powerful Seth, brandishing a spear, stands guard against Apophis on the prow of the solar barque, and he is the principal figure in (for example) Coffin Text 160, which includes a narrative account, much of it with Seth speaking in the first person, of the daily defeat of the serpent, a mythological event that was essential to the maintenance of world stability.

If such texts demonstrate an essential and even positive role for Seth in Egyptian cosmology, the fact remains that he was, in the first place, the enemy of Horus, the guarantor of order. Seth was a strong, dangerous god who, like the desert or Red Land he represented, was a constant threat to the inhabitants of the Black Land. If he played a positive role in political ideology, he was nevertheless the chief antagonist in the story that is generally thought of as the foundation myth of Egyptian kingship. Ironically, we have a complete version of this myth only from a non-Egyptian source, Plutarch. This means that the full story, as we know it best, includes numerous Hellenistic elements; but there is no concern that the basic myth is artificial or late, since there are allusions to it in hymnic and liturgical texts surviving from the full expanse of Egyptian civilization, as well as a folksy narrative account of the contest between Horus and Seth preserved in Papyrus Chester Beatty I (recto 1.1B16.8) of the Twentieth Dynasty (twelfth century B.C.E.). So there need be no apology for drawing upon Plutarch's version in trying to understand the relationship between Horus and Seth. In fact, a brief look at Plutarch's treatise *On Isis and Osiris* will be helpful to us in two ways. It will give us the opportunity to note (once again, but this time from a different perspective) the persistence of Seth after his defeat by Horus, with all that implies for the complementary character of Egyptian dualism. It will also provide an occasion to take a brief look at another kind of ancient dualism, the Platonic dualism of Plutarch himself, which was of a substantially different kind from anything we have considered so far.

The broad outlines of the kingship myth, as it is known both from native Egyptian sources and (in much more elaborated form) Plutarch, are as follows. The four children of Geb and Nut (Earth and Sky) were Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys. As Geb's firstborn and heir, Osiris was given rule over Upper and Lower Egypt; Isis was his queen. Seth was jealous and murdered Osiris, dismembering his body. Isis, however, gathered up the severed parts and reanimated them. When Osiris became sexually active again, Isis conceived and gave birth to Horus. The young god then set out to avenge his father's murder, and, with Geb and the other gods sitting in judgment, he defeated his uncle in a series of ordeals. Horus then assumed the double throne of his father, who now ruled in the Underworld, while Seth was banished—not killed—and became the god of the desert and foreign lands, or, according to the Chester Beatty papyrus, of the sky, where, as the adopted son of Re, he would intimidate the world with his roar, an allusion to his identification with the Syro-Canaanite storm-god Ba'al.

Plutarch was a Platonist, and he transformed the Egyptian story into Platonic allegory. He wanted to show that there are two opposing principles in the universe, as seen in his allegorical treatment of the Egyptian myth, according to which Osiris is the pure and immaterial principle of good and

Seth (Plutarch calls him Typhon) is the earthy principle of evil. These principles are coeval (not only is the good eternal, but also the bad), so that Seth emerges as a presence necessary to maintaining the harmony of the world. This is consistent with Plutarch's Egyptian sources, as we have seen, and its articulation in Plutarch's account may be testimony to the stubborn persistence of the complementary character of Egyptian dualism (that is, Plutarch may have found it difficult to ignore). The eternality and necessity of evil, however, is somewhat surprising in the context of Plutarch's Platonism.

Plato's basic contrast between the unchanging eternal realities (the Forms), which can be perceived only through thought, and the changing things of the physical world, which are perceived by the senses, is the starting point for another kind of dualism. This dualism is one of mind and body, which would have its own profound impact on the ancient world, including the ancient Oriental world after the establishment of Hellenistic civilization. In Plato there is a very strong tendency to restrict the list of Forms to those things that are good and virtuous. Only in a single passage in one of the Late Dialogues (*Theaetetus* 176–77) is the possibility admitted that there are Forms of evil things, an admission Plato seems reluctant to make elsewhere. Yet in the story of Horus and Seth, Plutarch, good Platonist or Middle Platonist that he is elsewhere, presents evil as essential, thus preserving the belief, intrinsic to the complementary dualism of Egypt, that Seth has an ongoing role in the universe.

As already noted in the case of Plutarch, the Greeks identified Seth with Typhon, the roaring, hundred-headed monster overcome by Zeus, who according to Hesiod (*Theogony* 819–69) hurled him into Tartarus. The story of Zeus and Typhon is a Western example a mythic theme that was very widespread among the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean, perhaps especially those of ancient Western Asia. This theme involved the victory of a creator god (or at least a god representing order) over a chaos dragon or monster. Typically, though not always, the creator god was associated with the predictable and beneficial aspects of nature, perhaps most commonly rainfall (i.e., the “storm-god”). Antithetically, the chaos dragon was associated with the unpredictable and often destructive aspects of nature, such as the ocean with its potential for dangerous storms and its constant erosion of the coastline. The juxtaposition in these myths of creation and order on the one hand and destruction and chaos on the other is suggestive of a cosmological dualism, at least when it is broadly defined. Moreover, since the chaos dragon, though defeated, is not annihilated but restricted (that is, confined to some location in the cosmos or even physically transformed into a part of the cosmos), the type of dualistic universe that is produced is one in which the hostile principles of order and chaos remain in a perpetual tension (the dragon is always a threat, lurking at the boundaries). Divine

and human society live within this tension, and this is consistent with the type of dualism we have described as dialectical or complementary.

In one of the principal Mesopotamian creation myths, best known from the *Enuma Eliš*, the conflict was generational, involving young gods and old. This pattern accords with the one also found in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Order was established as the result of the victory of a young rain-god (Marduk of Babylon or Ashur of Assyria) over Tiamat, the raging she-dragon of the cosmic ocean. Marduk-Ashur fashioned the physical world out of Tiamat's carcass, and she and the other deities of her primordial generation became components of the cosmic structure. Hesiod aside, there were similar myths in Greece, including the already-mentioned defeat of Typhon by Zeus, who trapped the monster beneath Mount Aetna, the volcanic fumes giving testimony to the ongoing danger of Typhon's smoldering fury, and the defeat of Python by Apollo at the cosmological center of the world, the spot that became the site of the Delphic oracle. In Syria and Canaan, there was the pervasive creation story of the defeat of the sea-dragon by the storm-god, best known from the Ugaritic epic in which Ba'al accepts Yamm's challenge to the divine assembly, defeats the sea-dragon, and then erects his own house or temple.

The same cosmogonic myth was known in ancient Israel, as shown by a series of archaic or archaizing biblical passages in which Yahweh defeats a cosmic sea-monster and creates the world. Thus in Ps 74:12–17, for example, the god of Israel is addressed as “the maker of the beneficial things that are in the world” (v 12) and praised for having destroyed the chaos monster, who is depicted as a many-headed dragon associated with the ocean and other bodies of water:

13 It was you who split up Sea by your strength, who shattered the heads of the Serpent upon the waters!

14 It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan,
who made him into food for wild animals!

15 It was you who split both spring and wadi,
who dried up the ever-flowing rivers!

16 The day belongs to you, also the night!
It was you established the luminaries and the sun!

17 It was you who fixed all the boundaries of the earth!
Summer and winter, you created them!

Note that creation in this poem is equated with the establishment of order, especially boundaries, not only physical but also temporal.

Ps 89:6–13 [English 5–12] presents a similar picture, beginning with a scene strongly reminiscent of that in which the Ugaritic Ba‘al stands in the divine assembly and accepts Yamm’s challenge. Here the chaos dragon is called Rahab, and his defeat is again cosmogonic, with the created world being praised in binary, if not necessarily dualistic, terms:

6 Let the Heavens praise your wonders, O Yahweh,
yea, your constancy in the assembly of the Holy Ones!

7 For who in the sky can be compared to Yahweh,
Which of the gods can be likened to Yahweh?

8 A god who causes trembling in the council of the Holy Ones,
greater and more feared than all those around him!

9 O Yahweh Sebaoth, whose power is like yours,
whose constancy, among those who are around you?

10 You are the one who mastered the uprisings of Sea!
When his waves lifted up you subdued them!

11 It was you who split up Rahab when he was slain,
with your mighty arm divided up your foe!

12 The skies are yours, yea, the earth is yours!
The world and all that fills it, you formed them!

13 North and south, you created them!
Tabor and Hermon, they cry out in your name!

Rahab is again the adversary in Isa 51:9–10, where the mythic motif of the battle of creation has been combined with the tradition-historical motif of the rescue of Israel at the Red Sea. This passage is from the exilic poet of Isaiah 40–55, and it invokes ancient cosmogonic tradition in appealing to Yahweh to stir into action.

9 Awake! Awake! Gird on armor, O arm of Yahweh!
Awake as in ancient days, as in primeval times!
Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces,
who slew the Serpent?

10 Was it not you who cut Sea to pieces,
the waters of the Great Deep?
who made the depths of the sea into a road
for the ransomed to cross?

Habakkuk 3:8–13, 15 sounds the same themes, providing an unusual amount of detail:

8 Was your wrath against Sea, O Yahweh,
your anger with River, your fury with Sea,
when you rode upon your horses,
your victorious chariot?

9 You kept your bow bent!
Your venomous arrows were sated!
The earth was split with rivers!

10 When they saw you the mountains writhed!
A torrent of water crossed by!
The Deep gave forth its voice!
The sun on high lifted its hand,

11 the moon stood still at the zenith
in the light of your arrows as they flew,
in the radiance of your flashing spear!

12 In fury you trod the earth,
in wrath you trampled the nations!

13 You came forth to rescue your people....

15 You trod on the sea with your horses,
churning up the mighty waters!

As already stressed, the primary pattern in Israel and elsewhere seems to be the defeat by a god associated with order of a chaos monster, who is then confined to its appropriate part of the cosmos. As a further example of this, we might mention the Mesopotamian account of subjugation by the god Ninurta of the demon Asag and his confinement between the banks of the Euphrates.³ Our final biblical example seems to be a variant of this pattern. Embedded in Job 38 is an allusion to a creation story in which the threatening Sea is confined to boundaries immediately at his birth rather than defeated and imprisoned in a cosmogonic battle. It is part of the great rebuke of Job by God speaking out of the whirlwind:

4 Where were you when I established the pillars of the earth?
Tell me if you have the knowledge!

5 Who determined its measurements (if you know),
and who stretched out the line upon it?

6 Upon what were its foundations sunk,
and who laid its cornerstone,

7 while the morning stars sang together,
and all the gods shouted their acclaim?

³ *ÁZAG*, *asakku* is a Mesopotamian word for “demon.”

8 Or who shut up Sea within doors
when he burst out of the womb?

9 When I set a cloud as his clothing,
a mist as his swaddling clothes,

10 and set limits for him,
and put a bar and doors in place?

11 And I said, "This far you may come,
and no farther!
Here you must stop when your waves swell up!"

In these examples from Western Asia and Greece, I have stressed not only the conflict between the creative force of a cosmogonic or state god and a destructive force of chaos and danger, with the dualistic cosmology that such a conflict implies, but also the continuing presence envisioned for the principle of chaos by its confinement within cosmological boundaries. Although there is always the danger that the monster will escape, the bounded situation is understood to be eternal, and human life is conducted in a world where the two principles of creation and destruction are always present. This, again, is a complementary type of dualism.

In the literature of the mature Israelite cultus, as represented by the so-called Priestly materials preserved in the Tetrateuch, the concept of a bounded universe remains central, although at this point we are at a considerable conceptual distance from the battle between Yahweh and the chaos dragon. The Priestly creation account in Gen 1:1–2:4a may not on the surface of things seem a particularly dualistic document, despite the fact that its basic structure is organized by a series of creative separations into binary pairs: light and dark, the super-celestial and sub-celestial waters, the gathered waters and dry land. Even so, Genesis 1 draws in its own way upon the ancient concept of the world as defined by boundaries, by the opposition of clear, irreducible, and opposing principles within which life goes on. It begins with chaos, understood not in Greek fashion as a gaping chasm but as a primordial broth with four characteristics, all negative (lack of shape, lack of content, lack of light and lack of solid matter), a time when "the world was formless and empty and there was darkness on the surface of the deep" (Gen 1:2a). At the conclusion of the account, this chaos has been transformed into order by a series of divinely mandated separations and divisions. In the cultus and in the marketplace, according to Priestly understanding, worship was to be performed and daily life conducted with careful respect for the established boundaries. To cite a simple example, a bird that flew in the sky and also waded in the water, elements separated at the time of creation, was not eligible as food for an Israelite.

The Genesis 1 creation account (and this example of an “unclean” wading bird in particular) points us towards a central feature of Israelite or Jewish religious thought that clearly, in my view, represents another ancient Near Eastern example of complementary or dialectical dualism. It is an aspect of biblical religion that probably originated in early times, though it persists into mature Judaism. Indeed its articulation is most clearly preserved in the literature of the exilic and early post-exilic periods, a time when apocalypticism (and with it a clearly *eschatological* form of dualism) was beginning to make important inroads in Jewish thought. In this example, however, the eschatological element is not yet present. The polarities are constants in the world of experience, and there is no expectation that one or the other will disappear as a consequence of a decisive eschatological struggle.

What I have in mind is the biblical system of ritual distinctions and regulations known as “purities.” This material is found primarily in the Priestly literature of the Tetrateuch, which, though widely agreed to be of exilic or post-exilic composition, is nevertheless thought to preserve concepts and practices of an earlier date. There are also instructive references to purity ideas in earlier biblical documents, such as the so-called Yahwistic or “J” narrative and in particular the Yahwistic account of the Flood. A number of the Priestly texts (most densely the materials collected in Leviticus 11:1–16:34) set forth rules regarding a fundamental pair of opposed ritual principles described by the Hebrew terms *tāhōr* (“pure” or “clean”) and *tāmē* (“impure” or “unclean”), terms that have clear parallels in numerous religious traditions worldwide. In the conduct of their daily lives, Israelites are enjoined to associate with that which is “pure” and avoid “impurities.” Since not all paired categories of this kind are diagnostic of an underlying cosmological dualism (even non-dualistic religions abound in simple dualities), it is important to keep in mind that the biblical concepts of *tāhōr* and *tāmē* are grounded in a fundamental concept of social identification, and that this concept is in turn sanctified with reference to one of the central tenets of the religion, the intimate association of Israelite society with the god of Israel. To express this in the language of Leviticus 15:31, which is cast as divine speech, “You must keep the people of Israel separate from their impurity, so that they will not die from their impurity by defiling my dwelling-place, which is in your midst.” Living in accordance with the purity regulations (that is, in proper relationship to the pure-impure polarity) establishes the community’s identity as Israel and distinguished its members from other peoples who do not respect the purities.

Pure and impure are not good and evil. Both the clean and unclean animals enumerated in Leviticus 11 are divinely created, and both types were kept alive on Noah’s ark according to both Priestly and Yahwistic tradition.

Yet only clean or “pure” animals are suitable for food for the Israelites, while non-Israelites are not subject to the same rules. The purpose of the polarity, then, is ethnic identification, an essential part of cosmology. Within the Israelite community, moreover, priests are subject to more stringent rules of purity than laypeople, as detailed in Leviticus 21, and in this way the social cosmology is further defined and refined. *Ṭāhōrā* (“purity,” “the pure”) is associated with *qōdeš* (“holiness,” “the holy”), which has its own binary pair in *hōl* (“the profane”). In principle, *qōdeš* is defined as a characteristic of Yahweh, so that the social maintenance of holiness is what permits the society’s association with its god to continue without danger. In language that echoes that used to describe the cosmogonic separations or distinctions made in the Priestly account of creation in Genesis 1, Leviticus 20:26 stipulates that “You shall be holy to me, because I, Yahweh, am holy, and I made a distinction between you and the (other) peoples so that you would be my own.” The ideal set forth in this material is for everyone (priests, laypeople and non-Israelites) to live in proper relation to the cosmological polarities of the pure and the impure, the holy and the profane. This is an element of complementary dualism that survived in Judaism even after the introduction of eschatological dualism beginning in the late biblical period.

In Judaism, the concepts just described become associated with an eschatological type of dualism only at a later date, and never exclusively so. This came about in the context of certain developments within Judaism that took place probably in the Persian Period, certainly in the Hellenistic Period and later. A chief characteristic of these developments was the increasing importance of apocalyptic thought. Apocalypticism looked forward to an imminent period of catastrophic upheaval that would mark the end of the present age and usher in a new world order characterized by the fulfillment of divine promises. These promises were ancient, and in the newly arrived Kingdom of God (as it was often called) the old would become new, in accordance with a perceived relationship between the time of the end and the salient and salvific events of human and cosmic history. Jewish apocalypticism in particular expected a role to be played in the momentous events to come by a savior figure with royal, priestly, and/or prophetic characteristics. The kingdom of God would be established on earth by the installation of a new regime or government, often under the leadership of the royal and/or priestly savior figure or figures and implemented by the glorious restoration of the ancient capital (the New Jerusalem).

Jewish apocalypticism deserves special attention here because it was characterized by a strong eschatological dualism. The present time was viewed eschatologically (that is, there was an acute sense that the end of a period of history was near, so that the present age was understood as the last

days). Those who were living through the last days experienced the world in sharply dualistic terms. Humanity was divided between the just and the unjust, the good and the evil, the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness; and this polarity was not confined to the human realm alone, because Jewish apocalyptic thinking included an elaborate angelology and demonology. In the world to come, there would be eternal rewards for the just and punishment for the unjust. When the kingdom of God finally arrived, however, the victory of good over evil would be absolute. There would be no ongoing role for the powers of darkness, and it is especially in this respect that this kind of eschatological dualism is to be distinguished from the complementary or dialectical dualism already discussed.

Apocalyptic Judaism is heavily represented in the library of the self-exiled Jewish community that is thought to have lived at Khirbet Qumran from the second century B.C.E. until the early years of the First Revolt against Rome. Although the sectarian literature from Qumran is thoroughly apocalyptic throughout, the principal apocalyptic document may be the so-called War Scroll (1QM, 4QM), which is a script for the final war between the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness. According to the opening words of the scroll, the forces of Darkness comprise the traditional enemies of Israel as well as the “new” enemy, “the Kittim,” in this case evidently the Romans. In one sense, then, this will be a battle between Israel and the nations, so that the old ethnic boundary markers of the Priestly regulations in the Bible have now hardened into the final demarcations of a struggle for annihilation. Also included among “the army of Belial,” the demonic commander, are “the ungodly of the Covenant” or “those acting wickedly against the Covenant” (the apostate Jews). The forces of Light include the sectarian community itself, divided between “the children of Levi” (the priests) and “the children of Judah and Benjamin” (the lay-people), who will march from their desert camp towards Jerusalem. They are reinforced by angelic forces under the command of the archangel Michael, who counterpoises Belial. The fundamental dualism is underlined by stress placed on the military equality of the two sides.

The purpose of the document is to prepare the members of the community for the war, of which both the battles and the ultimate outcome (the final destruction of the Kittim) are preordained. Ultimately God will intervene on behalf of the Children of Light, but only after a series of battles in which the two sides will be defeated and victorious in alternating “lots.” The fighting will proceed according to rules of war practiced by the Gentiles, but also according to the Law of Moses (angelic participation obliges human soldiers to observe biblical purity laws). The camp of the army of the Children of Light is modeled after the organization of Israel’s camp in the wilderness in Numbers 1–10, and the ritually impure are excluded from the

camp in according with the rules in the first four verses of Number 5 (1QM VII:3–7).

An important element in the war is the malediction of Belial and his cronies by the High Priest (1QM XIII:4–16), whose language reflects the eschatological dualism of the community⁴:

Cursed be Belial for his sinful purpose and may he be execrated for his wicked rule! Cursed be all the spirits of his company for their ungodly purpose and may they be execrated for all their service to uncleanness! Truly they are the company of Darkness, but the company of God is one of [eternal] Light...Thou hast created us for Thyself, [O God], that we may be an everlasting people. Thou has decreed for us a destiny of Light according to Thy truth. And the Prince of Light Thou has appointed from ancient times to come to our support; [all the sons of righteousness are in his hand], and all the spirits of truth are under his dominion. But Belial, the Angel of Malevolence, Thou has created for the Pit; his [rule] is in Darkness and his purpose is to bring about wickedness and iniquity. All the spirits of his company, the Angels of Destruction, walk according to the precepts of Darkness; towards them is their [inclination]...[For Thou hast appointed] the day of battle from ancient times...[to come to the aid] of truth and to destroy iniquity, to bring Darkness low and to magnify Light...to stand for ever, and to destroy all the sons of Darkness...

There is no ongoing role here for Belial and his associates—they are destined for “the Pit,” for utter destruction. The pronounced dualism of the War Scroll and similar literature is not complementary or dialectical but eschatological.

There was an increasing preference for this kind of dualism in the ancient world from the middle of the first millennium B.C.E. onward. How is this trend to be explained? Since it was precisely in the middle of the first millennium that the Persian Empire conquered the world, it has often been suggested that the rise of eschatological dualism was a symptom of the pervasive influence of Zoroastrianism, which, at least in its mature form, provides a paradigmatic example of this kind of thinking and which, from the time of Darius I (522–486 B.C.E.) onward, was the official religion of the Achaemenid Empire. The question we would like to be able to answer is whether Zoroastrianism is simply another example of the trend, or its primary impetus.

In assessing the influence of Iranian (and specifically Zoroastrian) thought on the religions of Western Asia and the Mediterranean, however, one faces a compound difficulty about which Iranologists are extremely cautious: the paucity and lack of clarity of the early sources, and the degree of confidence with which these sources can be regarded as authentically

⁴ The translation is that of Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Allen Lane/Penguin, 1997), 176–77.

early. The *Avesta* in its final composition is a document of the Sassanid Period (third-seventh centuries C.E.), compiled from surviving fragments of a much larger earlier collection. It would be helpful to us to be able to identify within it relics of Old Iranian religion and the early ideas introduced by Zarathustra's reforms and to distinguish these from the teachings of orthodox Zoroastrianism (the official religion of the Achaemenid Empire under Darius I and his successors) and still later developments. If we cannot make these distinctions confidently, however, we can take some comfort in the probability that it was a developed form of Zoroastrianism rather than the unrevised teachings of the prophet himself that so deeply influenced, for example, the development of apocalyptic Judaism in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods.

Assuming that it is his thought that is preserved in the earliest Avestan sources, Zarathustra seems to have seized upon a basic distinction in Old Iranian religion between truth and falsehood and developed it into a dualistic cosmology that viewed the world as an arena in which these two opposing principles and their adherents contend. The starting point of his religious teaching was the worship of Ahura Mazdâ, "the Wise Lord" and supreme creator by whom "Truth" (*ṛta*, *asha*), the physical and moral order, was created. In Zarathustra's dualism, therefore, the opposing forces of Truth and Falsehood are not coeval with Ahura Mazdâ and not, therefore, primordial. They made their first appearance as emanations of the Wise Lord. If this is correct, it distinguishes the dualism of Zarathustra himself from that of the orthodox Zoroastrianism, according to which Falsehood existed alongside Ahura Mazdâ himself from the beginning. In a difficult phrase in one of the most discussed passages in the Gâthic corpus (*Yasht* 30.3) reference is made to the secondary appearance of twin (*yama*) spirits, who are diametrically different in thought, word, and deed: the Beneficent *Spənta Mainyu* and the Destructive *Angra Mainyu*. Here, then, Truth and Falsehood, though coexistent from their origin, are not preexistent; they are the creations or emanations of Ahura Mazdâ. In orthodox Zoroastrianism, however, the Destructive Spirit, *Angra Mainyu* or rather Ahriman, was paired with Ahura Mazdâ himself, with whom it was coeval. The Wise Lord has been merged with the Beneficent Spirit. This presents a more radical dualism, according to which Truth and Falsehood existed together from the beginning.

The two original Spirits were different in every aspect of their beings (*Yashna* 45.2). One of the differences listed is "choice," and the diametrical divergence in their exercise of free will established a primordial pattern for human behavior. Later on in the Gâthic passage already referred to (*Yashna* 30.5), we are told that "Of these two Spirits, the deceitful...chose the worst course of action, (while) the most beneficent Spirit...(chose) Truth, (as)

also (do) those [people] who believably propitiate Ahura Mazdâ.” It is difficult for anyone familiar with the Qumran library not to see in this Old Avestan text a direct adumbration of a central tenet of the so-called “Doctrine of the Two Spirits” (1QS III:13–IV:26) of the *Serek Hayyahad*, according to which God

...created man to govern the world, and...appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and injustice. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of injustice spring from a source of darkness.... Until now the spirits of truth and injustice struggle in the hearts of men and they walk in both wisdom and folly. According to his portion of truth so does a man hate injustice, and according to his inheritance in the realm of injustice so is he wicked and so hates the truth. For God has established the two spirits in equal measure until the determined end.... He has allotted them to the children of men that they may know good [and evil, and] that the destiny of all the living may be according to the spirit within [them at the time] of the visitation.⁵

The Gāthic literature suggests that Zarathustra himself had a clear expectation that the just would be rewarded and the wicked punished, although he may have expected these judgments to occur in the present world. However clear Zarathustra’s own concept of “last things” was or was not, however, Zoroastrianism developed a full eschatology that could be viewed as a model for many elements in Jewish apocalypticism. Ahura Mazdâ would triumph over Ahriman and his followers at the end of history.

It seems clear that Iranian thought deeply influenced the specific ideas of Jewish apocalypticism and similar movements, and it was certainly the case that early Zoroastrianism, at least in its mature form, included a conceptual basis for what we have called eschatological dualism. To acknowledge these things, however, is not enough to show that the shift towards eschatological dualism in the second half of the first millennium was a consequence of the spread of Zoroastrian ideas in the historical context of Persian imperialism.

Conclusion

I would like to suggest a simple historical explanation for the shift in dualistic thinking from dialectical to eschatological. As we have seen, cosmological dualism envisions a polarized world, in which irreducible and often hostile principles exist in a relationship of opposition. In the complementary or dialectical type of dualism, this opposition, though it may be hostile, is permanent and even beneficial; the goal of life is to seek the harmonious position between the two polarities. As we saw, for example,

⁵ Translation from Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 101–3.

in the case of Horus and Seth, the opposition corresponds to (among other things) the distinction between Egypt, of which Horus was the governing principal, and the foreign lands, of which Seth was god. In Israel, the maintenance of the distinction between the pure and impure served to establish community identity by distinguishing between Israelites (who were required to respect the purities) and foreigners (who were not). Even apart from questions of cosmological dualism, the distinction between those who were native-born and foreigners was essential in these traditions, as in most. Both Egypt and Israel, in fact, had conventional lists of foreigners with whom they lived in a kind of dialectical relationship, sometimes hostile, sometimes productive, sometimes both. In Egypt, these included Libyans, Nubians, and Asiatics, among others, or, in traditional language, the Nine Bows, the foreign peoples whom Pharaoh subdued. In Israel, they included, in the first place, the kindred nations of Ammon, Moab, and Edom (the children of Lot and Esau) and the Arameans, but also the truly foreign peoples, such as the Canaanites and the Egyptians.

For the Egyptians throughout most of their long history, and for the Israelites in the early period of their existence, it was natural enough to think of themselves as living in a creative tension with these foreigners. Foreigners they were, and not infrequently hostile, but they were familiar nonetheless. Beginning in the first half of the first millennium, however, new peoples began to appear on the borders of Egypt and Israel, partly as a result of developing long-distance trade but primarily, and most threateningly, as a result of the westward spread of eastern peoples with imperial ambitions. Here was a new kind of foreigner, quite unlike the original Nine Bows or the Children of Lot. The new foreigners were totally alien (or alien in a qualitatively different way). When the Assyrians in the seventh century and the Persians in the sixth reached (and crossed) the border of Egypt, they were identified with Seth, the god of foreign lands, according to time-honored tradition. But now the figure of Seth grew darker; he was demonized, and his desert temples were dismantled. The creative tension between native-born and foreigner had become too strained. As far as I know, Egypt never adopted a fully eschatological dualism, but Israel did, with the demon Belial leading an army of Kittim, mythological foreigners who were radically alien. Dualism became predominantly eschatological in the region, unable to maintain the creative tension of the complementary systems of the past. The ideal of living in creative tension with the Other was replaced by the anticipation of his obliteration.

Sydney H. Aufrère

Dualism and Focalization in Alexandrian Religious Thought in Egypt at the Beginning of the Ptolemaic Period:

Manetho of Sebennyos and the Argive Myth

Introduction

This paper deals with the *mise en perspective* of myths in a political and religious framework. My objective is to explore the beginning of the Ptolemaic Period in Egypt during the reigns of Ptolemaeus Sôter and Ptolemaeus Philadelphus.¹ I focus on Manetho of Sebennytus,² a leading scholar of Alexandria during the period the Alexandrine Serapeum and the library were built (third century B.C.E.).³ The purpose of this paper is to

¹ On these two reigns, see the recently translated book by Gunther Höbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire* (London: Routledge, 2001). For the German original see *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches. Politik, Ideologie und religiöse Kultur von Alexander dem Großen bis zur römischen Eroberung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994). On the history of Ptolemaic Egypt, see Alan K. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs 332 BC – AD 642 from Alexander to the Arab Conquest* (London: British Museum Publications, 1986).

² On this high priest of the time of Ptolemaeus I Sôter and Ptolemaeus II Philadelphus and his work, see Laqueur, “Manetho (Leben, Werk, bei Josephus contra Apionem, in der christlichen Chronographie, Aufbau der Werke, Quellen und Bewertung der Aegyptiaka, Sothisbuch, Fragmente aus Manetho),” in *Pauly-Wissowa XIV/1* (München: Druckenmüller, 1928), cols. 1060–110; and William G. Waddell, *Manetho* (Loeb 350; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944). For more on Manetho, see my forthcoming book, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*. On the principles of ancient chronology, see Sydney H. Aufrère, “Potocki et ses principes de Chronologie: de l’allusion à l’illusion,” in *Jean Potocki : Œuvres III*, ed. F. Rosset and D. Triaire (La République des Lettres 13; Louvain: Peeters, 2004), 145–83. The abbreviation *F* + number refers to Theodor Hopfner, *Fontes Historiae Religionis Aegyptiacae* (Bonnae: A. Marci and E. Weberi, 1922–1924). In this paper, however, I use the abbreviations of Bernard Mathieu, *Recommandations aux auteurs et abréviations des périodiques* (Ifao, 1993). A very specialized bibliography on the diffusion of Egyptian cults and concepts in the Hellenistic and Roman period is found in Jean Leclant and Gisèle Clerc, *Inventaire bibliographique des Isiaca (IBIS), Répertoire analytique des travaux relatifs à la diffusion des cultes isiaques* (EPRO 18; Leiden: Brill, 1972–1991), and, generally speaking, in the monograph series entitled *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain* (EPRO), published by Brill.

³ Luciano Canfora, *La véritable histoire de la Bibliothèque d’Alexandrie* (Paris: Desjonquère, 1986); Luciano Canfora, “Le monde en rouleaux,” in *Alexandrie IIIe siècle av. J.-C. Tous les savoirs du monde ou le rêve d’universalité des Ptolémées*, ed. Christian Jacob and François de Polignac (Autrement - Série Mémoires 19; Paris: 1992), 49–62; Derek A. Flower, *The Shores of Wisdom: The Story of the Ancient Library of Alexandria* (Alexandria: Xlibris, 2001).

show how the native intellectual elite of Hellenistic Egypt applied longstanding, dualistic hermeneutics to Greek and Egyptian religious myths in a way that produced bifocal conceptions of both.

Dualism in Egyptian Religion

If we construe dualism as a belief in the existence of two primary, yet opposite, forces within the universe, then we may apply the term dualism to Egyptian religion. Because of the specific nature of the environment in which the Pharaonic ethnic group lived over the course of several millennia, they were inclined to perceive the universe in terms of violent contrasts, dictated by biotope, geography, geomorphology, and climate.⁴ The Egyptian is confronted with an eminently bipolar world. As a result, the Egyptian organization of cosmology arises from the existence of two basic, polar concepts. The opposition between Good (*nfr*) and Evil (*dw*),⁵ or Organization (*m3ʕt*)⁶ and Disorganization (*jzft*), represent only two components of a wide conceptual framework in Egyptian cosmology.

As represented in divine allegories, the existence of the universe consists of a struggle between opposites. For example, the annual solar cycle and the alternation of day and night relate to a continuous cosmic battle between the strength of Light and Good, gathered around Rē' (depicted as a ram, or Light), against those of Darkness and Evil, gathered around Apophis (depicted as an ophidian, or Darkness).⁷ From another point of view, however, complementarity is ensured by an Osirian and Horian myth related by Plutarch. This myth portrays divine and mythical archetypes of kingship based on legitimacy, the transfer of power from the father to the son from the time of the gods (*theoi*) and demi-gods (*hemi-theoi*) onwards.⁸ But, allegorically

⁴ I refer to the construal of Egyptian biotope found in Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*; cf. *infra*, 11. Cf. Plutarque, *Oeuvres morales* V – 2^e partie, *Isis et Osiris* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1988); J. Gwyn Griffith, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride* (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press, 1970); Jean Hani, *La religion égyptienne dans la pensée de Plutarque* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1976).

⁵ For the Egyptian terms *dw* and *jzft*, see Jérôme Rizzo, *Le terme dw dans les textes de l'ancienne Égypte. Essai d'analyse lexicale* [Doctorat, Montpellier III University, November 2003].

⁶ See Jan Assmann, *Maât, l'Égypte pharaonique et l'idée de justice sociale* (Paris: Julliard, 1989); Christian Cannuyer, "La sagesse biblique et la Maât égyptienne," in *Égypte, Afrique & Orient* 27 (2002): 27–38; Bernadette Menu, *Recherches sur l'histoire juridique, économique et sociale de l'ancienne Égypte II* (BdE 122; Le Caire: Ifao, 1998), 225–30.

⁷ See Sydney H. Aufrère, "La sénescence de Rê. La salive, le serpent, le rire et le bâton dans les textes cosmogoniques et magiques de l'Égypte ancienne," in *L'ancienneté chez les Anciens II: Mythologie et religion*, ed. Béatrice Bakhouch (Montpellier: Université Montpellier III, 2003), 321–39.

⁸ Manetho, Fragment 1. Cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 44–59.

speaking, the confrontation of Osiris and Seth, then of Horus and Seth,⁹ evokes the seasons and the alternation of the agrarian cycle, as Plutarch reminds us. Therefore, these two cycles—solar and royal—show that order, harmony, and legitimacy are perpetually threatened by chaos and that their maintenance is closely connected to panegyries (annual festivals and daily rites).¹⁰ On the basis of these oppositions, ancient Egyptian cosmology proves to be a site of ambivalence and dualism.

Concerning these two mythical cycles, some religious texts (supported by iconography) offer a similar, if more subtle, reading that admits numerous alternations and many paradoxes. Even though one usually conceives of Egypt as a repository of dogmatic beliefs showing no nuances (a system of thought defined by the poles of a dualistic conception of cosmic strengths facing one another—of the opposition and complementarity of the opposites), Egyptian thought also contains a long history of an alternative hermeneutic in which the deities' ambiguity is highlighted by the polysemy of Egyptian images and their relationship to divine epithets. These images and epithets portray divine beings naturally inclined towards syncretisms and focalizations of all kinds. Horus and Seth, despite the fact that their natures appear to be completely opposite and irreconcilable, nonetheless remain components of a bipolar system that is simultaneously dual and yet alternative. This alternative character expresses not only the constant fight of climatic elements in the Nile Valley—of the desert opposed to the valley, of the infertile to the fertile, the non-law to the law—but also the dualism of a deity that can appear under a mask or as another. Thus Egypt formulated a

⁹ For information on the relationship between Seth and Typhon, see D. Fabre, "De Seth à Typhon et vice versa," *Égypte, Afrique & Orient* 22 (2001): 41–53. The Myth of Horus at Edfu, which expresses the fight between Horus of Edfu and Seth, shows a duality between two antagonistic divine forces. From a mythological point of view, these opposing powers embody the alternation of the seasons in Egypt. The important moments of the fight provide the Egyptian clergy with the opportunity to celebrate solemn ceremonies. See Maurice Alliot, *Le culte d'Horus à Edfou au temps des Ptolémées* (BdE 20; Le Caire, 1949).

¹⁰ Siegfried Schott, *Altägyptische Festsdaten* (Mainz: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1950). See C. Jouco Bleeker, *Egyptian Festival: Enactments of Religious Renewals* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); Richard Parker, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt* (SAOC 26; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950); Reinhold Merkelbach, *Isisfeste in griechisch-Römischer Zeit. Daten und Riten, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* (BKP 5; Meisenheim-am-Glan: A. Hain, 1963). More recently, especially for quotations about festivals in private documents between the Middle Kingdom and the Late Period see Anthony J. Spalinger, *The Private Feast Lists of Ancient Egypt* (ÄgAbh 57; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996). On civil calendars, see Leo Depuydt, *Civil Calendars and Lunar Calendars in Ancient Egypt* (OLA 77; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 9–20. On festivals in Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, see Sydney H. Aufrère, "Fêtes, processions et rites égyptiens dans le *De Iside et Osiride* de Plutarque," in *La fête. La rencontre du sacré et du profane*. Deuxième Colloque international organisé par les cahiers Kubaba (Université Paris I) et l'Institut catholique de Paris 6 et 7 décembre 2002, *Cahiers Kubaba*, ed. Michel Mazoyer (Paris: Cahiers Kubaba, 2004), 43–65.

religious compromise by establishing the multiplicity of expressions of the divine not only from the variable character of nature and its phenomena, but also from human nature. Egyptians were experts at this type of interplay, and their exposure to non-Egyptian religious systems continually produced new and innovative conceptions of the divine. Egyptian history has been understood as a melting-pot where Egyptian and Greek myths were submitted to a syncretic and dualistic *mise en abyme*.

The Principles

In introducing the work of Manetho, one must underscore that in the canonical books, among which the kings' lists appear, the Egyptians conceived their history as a series of divine (gods and half-gods) and human dynasties. The two divine dynasties initiated by the Memphite god Ptah (Hephaistos in Manetho's and Diodorus's works) are followed by a human dynasty beginning with the legendary king Meni (Menes of Manetho) of the Egyptian kings' lists, inaugurating the Thinite dynasty. *The Canon of Turin* is currently the sole Egyptian document referring to such vestiges of a divine and human royal canon.¹¹ Although not very well preserved, this text is instructive, since it shows that the earthly dynasties are the guarantors of the tradition inaugurated by the gods. The history of the human dynasties extends the celestial dynasties' myth and upholds it until the end of Pharaonic Egypt.

One finds again in the *Aegyptiaca* (a text to which I will return below), the well known historical work of Manetho, the traditional structure of Egyptian history. Other sources reveal, though, that this history was also based on myths, some of which have a foreign origin. Therefore history can be diverted from its original purpose, which is to recall the great events of the past and the succession of the kings of Egypt, in order to provide a vehicle for speculation and religious propaganda.

This mythological speculation calls for an explanation. If we set aside the field of opposition of allegoric concepts, and if, by extension, we consider in dualism the coexistence of opposite and complementary elements, we must consider this problem from the point of view of mythological and thematic permutability, *interpretatio*, focalization, bi-focalization, and also the mythical *mise en abyme*.

1. *Permutability* (A/B) is the principle by virtue of which some opposite allegorical characters evoking religious concepts embody different features alternatively or successively. The consequence of this interchangeability is the alternation of concepts. This conceptual in-

¹¹ *Editio princeps*, in Alan H. Gardiner, *The Royal Canon of Turin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), pl. I, frgs. 11–12.

terchangeability is expressed from an iconographic point of view by means of bifrontality.

2. *Interpretatio* is a principle by virtue of which one establishes a correlation between deities coming from different cultures, but which share common characteristics expressed through iconography or divine epithets and epiclesis. Syncretism operates through *interpretatio*; its aim is to favor cultural convergences emanating from divine archetypes.
3. *Focalization*, through the parallelism of scenes on each side of an axis, induces the *mise en perspective* of deities or liturgical scenes, whose common features are exploited. The purpose of this system is to create the illusion of a third virtual dimension—one not explicitly expressed—from the “setting in perspective” of the first two objects or elements (A and B). Focalization strengthens permutability.
4. *Bi-focalization* derives from focalization, but it differs by placing the elements putting into perspective, either from the point of view of the writing or the iconography. For example, one postulates that A equals B and simultaneously employs *interpretatio*.
5. *Mise en abysme* is a type of bi-focalization, but in this case A and B serve to reflect their own image to infinity.

The conception of the temple itself, a magical substitute for the universe especially during the Late Period,¹² reveals priestly focalization. In the temple, the priests organized the world according to the local theological program. Thus the liturgical scenes represented on the sanctuary walls follow a method of chiasms, stackings, parallelisms, and divine complementarity.¹³ In the system of Egyptian beliefs, the composition of divine allegories was cultivated with ambiguity and uncertainty, reflecting the basic notion that the universe and the network of human passions are complex.

Towards the end of the Pharaonic period, Egypt ended up opposing traditional dualism in favor of a kind of focalization that was better suited to the religious concepts of the time. This system of focalization is all the more complex in that it suggests a religious compromise between Egyptian and Greek views, grafting these views together in a space of significant economic exchange: the Canopic branch of the Nile, considered as a new Argolid or an Egyptian substitute for Argos' plain watered by the Inachos river. According to Herodotus, the Canopic branch of the Nile had received

¹² Sydney H. Aufrère, “The Egyptian Temple, Substitute for the Mineral Universe,” in *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt*, ed. William V. Davies (London: The British Museum Press, 2001), 158–63.

¹³ See Christian Leitz, *Die Aussenwand des Sanktuars in Dendara. Untersuchungen zur Dekorationssystematik* (MÄS 50; Mainz: Ph. von Zabern, 2001).

Greek trade since the twenty-sixth dynasty in the areas of Canopus,¹⁴ Thônis,¹⁵ Saïs, Naukratis,¹⁶ and the capital, Memphis. This setting of cultural interchange between Saite Egypt and the Hellenes provided a context favorable for the development of new beliefs. With the input of new ideas and the exchange of religious concepts coming from this opening of Egypt to the Mediterranean sea from the Saite period onwards,¹⁷ the thought of the Late Period favored the convergence of divergent concepts, with groups of mixed populations facilitating cultural integration and interpenetration.

Manetho of Sebennytyus and the Mythical Reinterpretation of History

Such an interpenetration of ideas took place among highly educated Egyptians of Alexandria during the reigns of Ptolemaeus I Sôter and Ptolemaeus II Philadelphus. Alexandria was a crossroads of Egyptian, Greek, and Jewish thought. The city provides a unique window into the melding of Greek and Egyptian religious ideas, even if such a melding was hardly novel. Indeed, as early as the fifth century B.C.E., Herodotus describes the identity of Egyptian deities by means of the *interpretatio* process. In Alexandria of the third century, however, the figure who best embodies this intellectual and religious interface is the Great Priest of Heliopolis,

¹⁴ On the links between canopic jars under the protection of the four sons of Horus and the effluvia emanating from the Canopic branch in Canopus, see J. Kettel, "Canope, rDw.w d'Osiris et Osiris-Canope," in *Hommages à Jean Leclant* (Le Caire, 1994), 315–30; François Servajean, "Le lotus émergeant et les quatre fils d'Horus. Analyse d'une métaphore physiologique," in *Encyclopédie religieuse de l'Univers végétal de l'Égypte ancienne II*, ed. Sydney H. Aufrère (*OrMons XI*; Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 2001), 261–97. On the emanations from Osiris considered as the flood of the Nile and in relation to sacred trees, see Sydney H. Aufrère, "L'arbre sacré, les buttes arborées des sanctuaires de l'Égypte ancienne et la crue du Nil," in *L'arbre: symbole et réalité*. Actes des Premières journées universitaires de Hérisson organisées par la ville de Hérisson et les Cahiers Kubaba, Université de Paris I - Panthéon-Sorbonne les 21 et 22 juin 2002, ed. Michel Mazoyer et al. (*Collection Kubaba*; Série Actes II; Paris: Université de Paris, 2003), 105–34.

¹⁵ On the discovery of the Thônis stela (a duplicate of the Naukratis stela), see Jean Yoyotte, "Le second affichage du décret de l'an 2 de Nékhebef et la découverte de Thônis-Héracléion," in *Égypte, Afrique & Orient* 24 (2001): 25–31.

¹⁶ W. M. Flinders Petrie and Ernest A. Gardiner, *Naukratis I* (London: Trübner, 1886); David G. Hogarth, "Excavations at Naukratis," in *Annual of the British School at Athens* 5 (1898–99): 26–97; William D. E. Coulson and Albert Leonard Jr., *Cities of the Delta I: Naukratis: Preliminary Report on the 1977–1978 and 1980 seasons* (Malibu: Undena, 1981); William D. E. Coulson and Albert Leonard Jr., "The Naukratis project 1983," *Muse* 17 (1983): 64–71; Henri De Meulenaere, "Naukratis," in *LÄ IV* (Wiesbaden: Westendorf, 1972), cols. 360–61. The reader will find an overview of the Egyptian Eldorado for the Greek in Naphtali Lewis, *Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt: Case Studies in the Social History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 8–36.

¹⁷ Christine Favard-Meeks, "Le Delta égyptien et la mer jusqu'à la fondation d'Alexandrie," *SAK* 16 (1989): 39–63; Christine Favard-Meeks and Dimitri Meeks, "L'héritière du Delta," in *Alexandrie IIIe siècle av. J.-C. Tous les savoirs du monde ou le rêve d'universalité des Ptolémées*, ed. Christian Jacob and François de Polignac (*Autrement - Série Mémoires* 19; Paris: 1992) 22–34.

Manetho. According to a pseudepigraphic letter attributed to Manetho and addressed to Philadelphus,¹⁸ it appears that the sovereign, who was interested in understanding the habits and customs of those living in his empire, asked Manetho to translate into Greek several works that constitute the source of the Egyptian religious thought—not the canon of books mentioned by Clement of Alexandria and derived from the catalogues of priestly libraries, but other works such as one concerning Egyptian historiography, traditionally referred to as *Aegyptiaca*, “Egyptian Stories.”¹⁹

It is useful to present some background information here. Evidence of Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca* exists only in two excerpts from the original work that appear in Flavius Josephus’ *Contra Apionem* and several versions of a digest (*epitômê*)²⁰ preserved in the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea²¹ and in Julius Africanus, both compiled by Georgius Syncellus of Constantinopolis in the eighth century. When one takes into account the different versions of Manetho’s digest work in the Latin translation of Jerome,²² notably two unpublished manuscripts coming from the Library of the École de Médecine at Montpellier, dated from the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Mss. 32 and 86), as well as the Tournai edition of 1512, one discovers valuable indications of the mythico-historical context surrounding the introduction of the worship of Sarapis in Egypt.

Plutarch relates that Ptolemaeus Sôter, having dreamed about the colossal statue of Pluto in Sinopolis, transported it to Alexandria. There, on the basis of the presence of images of Cerberus and the snake, Manetho (with Timotheus, the presages’ interpreter) identified this image as Pluto, whose Egyptian name was Sarapis.²³ In a similar manner Manetho identified the

¹⁸ *Manetho*, 208–11; Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 39–43.

¹⁹ The question of the origins of the Egyptian books translated by Manetho has been investigated in Sydney H. Aufrère, “Manéthôn de Sebennytos et la traduction en grec de l’épistémê sacerdotale de l’Égypte sous le règne de Ptolémée Philadelphe. Quelques réflexions,” dans *Actes du Séminaire “Transmission des textes religieux dans le monde méditerranéen jusqu’au premier millénaire,”* organized by B. Bakhouch and Philippe Lemoigne, in *Dieu parle la langue des hommes. Études sur la transmission des textes religieux (Ier millénaire)*, ed. B. Bakhouch and Philippe Lemoigne. (Histoire du Texte biblique 8; Lausanne, 2005), 13–49.

²⁰ Probably as a result of the great expense of papyrus, complete works were sometimes abridged in digests. Cf. Naphtali Lewis, *Papyrus in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974); and Sydney H. Aufrère, “La fabrication du papyrus égyptien et son circuit commercial en Méditerranée. De l’époque saïte au Haut Moyen Âge,” in *Méditerranées* 30/31 (2002): 13–34.

²¹ *Eusebii Caesariensis Episcopi Chronicon: quod Hieronymus presbyter divino ejus ingenio Latinitatem facere curavit et usque in Valentem Caesarem Romano adjecit eloquio. Ad quem et Prosper et Matthaëus Palmerius et Matthias Palmerius demum et Iannes Multivallis complura quae ad haec usque tempora subsecuta sunt adjecere* (Tournai, 1512); Henricus Stephanus, 4.

²² Leo Depuydt, “Glosses to Jerome’s Eusebios as a Source for Pharaonic History,” *CdE LXXVI*, 151–52 (2001): 30–47.

²³ On the Sarapis cult, see Wilhelm Hornbostel, *Sarapis. Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte den Erscheinungen und Wandungen der Gestalt eines Gottes* (EPRO 32; Leiden: Brill, 1973).

Egyptian god of the dead, Osiris-Apis of Memphis, with the Greek god of the dead. Manetho's contextualization of Sarapis worship is a consequential move. The *Aegyptiaca* ordered by Philadelphus allowed Sarapis²⁴ worship to appear as the natural result of a development of thought inaugurated long in the past. The *Aegyptiaca*²⁵ linked Egyptian mythology and history with Greek beliefs and framed this connection as a development of religious syncretisms favorable to the political powers, namely, Ptolemaeus I.

The arduous task of the publication of the *Aegyptiaca* and books more or less attributed to Manetho and his epigones (with a French translation and commentary of the whole work preserved in the epitome)²⁶ has allowed me to explore the process of the bi-focalization of both Greek and Egyptian belief. In principle, this bi-focalization consists of grafting elements from the Argive mythological cycle onto a different historico-mythological base. We may now inquire about the *mise en perspective* of the Argive myths and Egyptian history. In particular, it is important to attend to their dualistic reappropriation against the background of a chronological dispute.

The Mythologico-Historical Bi-Focalization in Manetho's Work

The notion that an ancient relationship existed between Egypt and Greece is found in the legends concerning Inachus, the founder of Argos²⁷ and eponymous hero of the river irrigating the Argos plain. According to Eusebius,²⁸ the genesis of this relationship between Egypt and Greece may be fixed to a specific point in time, since the death of Inachus (considered a contemporary of king Amosis²⁹) took place twenty generations before

²⁴ Fragment 80. Plutarque, *De Is. et Osir.* 28 = Manetho, 192, 194 = Manethôn de Sebennytos, 871.

²⁵ The *Aegyptiaca*, which echoes the religious work of Manetho, is not a mere Book of the Kings, but a work originally including excerpts of the kings' lives. These excerpts included the number of regnal years for each sovereign and a division into dynasties.

²⁶ Sydney H. Aufrère, *L'Odyssée d'Aigypptos. Le Sceptre et le Spectre* (Paris: Pages du Monde, 2007), 57–68; Id., *Pharaon foudroyé. Du mythe à l'histoire* (Gerardmer: Pages du Monde, 2010), 63–69.

²⁷ On Argos, see Hirschfeld, in *Pauly-Wissowa* III/1, (1895): 787–89. Cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 74. This fact gave an opportunity for Flavius Josephus (Manetho's Fragment 50 = Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I, 15, 16, 93–105) to set the colonization of his country by Shepherds coming out of Egypt before the arrival of Danaos in Argos (cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 372).

²⁸ *Praep. ev.* X: 11, 15.

²⁹ Following Tatian who quotes Apio and Ptolemaeus of Mendes (found in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* X: 11, 14, 15) (cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 389). The name Inachos (Inachus) is only quoted by Barbarus, who gives an excerpt of Africanus (Waddell, *Manetho*, 16–23; Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 74), but there remain few reasons to think that he reproduces a gloss borrowed by Eusebius. It is very likely, however, that the name of Inachos originally appeared in the genuine work of Manetho because this name appears, chronologically speaking, as a *terminus ante quem*.

the fall of Troy, while the assault of Troy was contemporaneous with the king Polybos (whom Manetho assimilates to the Egyptian king Thouoris³⁰ in the nineteenth dynasty). Through these accounts of Inachus, the most ancient Greek king, mythical Greek history is linked with Egyptian history.

According to the long excerpt from Manetho reproduced by Flavius Josephus in *Contra Apionem*, Manetho's bi-focal reading of history begins, chronologically speaking, with the story of Danaos and Aegyptos, two eponymous heroes identified in the translation of William G. Waddell as Armaïs (Horemheb) and Sethos or Ramesses:³¹

...then his son Harmaïs for 4 years 1 month, his son Ramessês for 1 year 4 months, his son Harmessês Miamun for 66 years 2 months, his son Amenôphis for 19 years 6 months, and his son Sethôs, also called Ramessês, whose power lay in his cavalry and his fleet. This king appointed his brother Harmaïs viceroy of Egypt, and invested him with all the royal prerogatives, except that he charged him not to wear a diadem, nor to wrong the queen, the mother of his children and to refrain likewise from the royal concubine. He then set out on an expedition against Cyprus and Phoenicia and later against the Assyrians and the Medes; and he subjugated them all, some by the sword, other without a blow and merely by the menace of his mighty host. In the pride of his conquest, he continued his advance with still greater boldness, and subdued the cities and lands at the East. When a considerable time has elapsed, Harmaïs who had been left behind in Egypt, recklessly contravened all his brother's injunctions. He outraged the queen and proceeded to make free with the concubines; then, following the advice of his friends, he began to wear a diadem and rose in revolt against his brother. The warden of the priest of Egypt then wrote a letter which he sent to Sethôsis, revealing all the details, including the revolt of his brother Harmaïs. Sethôsis forthwith returned to Pêlusium and took possession of his kingdom; and the land was called Aegyptus after him. It is said that Sethôs was called Aegyptus and his brother Harmaïs, Danaus (λέγεται γὰρ ὅτι ὁ μὲν Σέθως ἐκαλεῖτο Αἴγυπτος Ἀρμαῖς δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ Δαναός).

One finds in this excerpt the linking of two Egyptian kings known from historical documents with two eponymous heroes borrowed from Greek mythology.

Two possibilities exist:

- 1) The Sebennyte is the actual author of this bi-focal narrative; or

³⁰ Cf. Fragments 55–56 in Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 76. There is an ulterior motive for Manetho's mention of the name Inachos while assimilating Homer's Polybos to Thouoris in an account of the Trojan War. Cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn of Sebennytos*, 76, 389. Aufrère, "Manéthôn de Sebennytos: l'histoire égyptienne travestie et la pseudo-historicisation du mythe grec," in *Mélanges offerts à Didier Pralon*, ed., Gilles Dorival, Anne Balansard and Mireille Loubet (Aix-en-Provence, 2010), forthcoming.

³¹ Fragment 50. Flavius Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I, 15, 16, 105; cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 372. The English translation is taken from Waddell, *Manetho*, 103–5.

- 2) Manetho laid the foundations for this bi-focalization in his treatise, and these links were appropriated or modified by other authors afterwards.

That the Sebennyte is the author of the literary framework seems more than likely, owing to his intellectual training, even if we notice that the sentence mentioned in the excerpt of Manetho preserved in Josephus incidentally comes at the end of a long development on Sethōs and Ramessēs, precisely in the same way Manetho identifies Osarseph and Mose. In Flavius Josephus this sentence is considered as coming from Manetho himself: “Such is Manetho’s account” (Ταῦτα μὲν ὁ Μανεθῶς). The passage is recapitulated in the Greek and Armenian versions of Eusebius, as well as in the Latin translation of a Eusebius version more complete than the one reproduced in Syncellus’ work (as we will see) and which we find again in the Sothis Book, where the development is much longer.³²

For this reason, the reader is encouraged to deduce the following: both Argos, the most ancient among the Greek cities, and Egypt share in a common history, through the myth of their respective eponymous heroes. Danaos is used as an eponymous hero for the Greeks, called Daneans (gr. Δαναοί, -ῶν; Lat. *Danai, orum, um*) in the Homeric poems; and according to the Greeks, Aigyptos is the one of the Egyptians (Αἰγύπτιος being based on an Egyptian etymology, *Hut-ka-Ptah*, a religious designation of Memphis).³³ Hence it appears that in the Greek myth, Argos derives its fame not only from the antiquity of Inachides’ family, but also from its mythical links to Egypt. Hence, through this process of focalization, the emergence of the Danaos family is portrayed as deriving from the division of an historical Egyptian royal family, a division that constitutes the foundation of a cultural and mythical community. This pseudo-historical Egyptian division leads to the second period of Egypt, when it was called Aigyptos, after having been named Mestraïa (Semitic name) and Aeria (Greek name), as is confirmed in a passage of Sothis Book,³⁴ which derives from a passage

³² Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennyte*, 839–41.

³³ In other traditions, particularly Diodorus (*Bibl. hist.* I, XVIII, 4 = F 99), Aigyptos gives his name to the river. According to pseudo-Plutarch (*De fluv.* 16, 1 = F 397, 716), he threw himself in the Nile, and people gave to this the name of Aigyptos. On the etymology of “Egypt” (< Ḥwt-k3-Pth), see Sydney H. Aufrère and Nathalie Bosson, “Un dictionnaire des curiosités égyptiennes. Une approche de sémantique historique. De Ḥwt-k3-Pth, Αἰγύπτιο, à ses avatars vieux-français *djoupcin* et *edjoupcin*,” in *Études coptes* VII. Neuvième journée d’études coptes, Montpellier 3–4 juin 1999 (*Cahiers de la Bibliothèque Copte* 12; Louvain: Peeters, 2000), 1–15; Nathalie Bosson, “Copte: de l’ambiguïté à une réalité sociale et linguistique,” in *Égyptes. L’Égyptien et le copte*, ed. Nathalie Bosson and Sydney H. Aufrère (Lattes: Musée archéologique, 1999), 23–25.

³⁴ However, both Mss. 53, 86 and the Tournai edition (1512) of the *Chronicle* of Eusebius, focus the outlines of another myth which echoes elsewhere, especially concerning the modification of the name of Egypt. From Aeria, it produces Aigyptos in light of the eponymous hero, Aigypt(i)os. The modification of the name of Egypt from Aeria to Aigyptos certainly appeared in the

from the true Manetho. Manetho fosters the interpenetration of myth and history. As we have seen, this reasoning process builds on an analogous relationship between the Canopic branch of the Nile and the Argolide watered by the Inachos river.

But, *in cauda venenum*, the introduction of the myth at the end of the second Book of the *Aegyptiaca* served to demonstrate the greater antiquity of the Egyptian chronology in relation to the Greek one, which represents, at the time when Manetho wrote his books, one of the most important cultural and political enterprises in which African, Mediterranean, and Oriental peoples were involved. Nonetheless let us keep the most synthetic passage of the epitome (Fragment 53a), which, instead of evoking Armaïs-Danaos and Sethos-Aigyptos, modifies the second one in Ramesses-Aigyptos:³⁵

12. Armaïs, also called Danaos, for 5 years: thereafter, he was banished from Egypt and, fleeing from his brother Aigyptos, he arrived in Greece, and seizing Argos, he ruled over the Argives.

13. Ramessês, also called Aigyptos, for 68 years.

However let us acknowledge that Manetho historically situated an ancient Greek national myth in a manner that was potentially flattering for the

genuine work of Manetho, and the passage was imperfectly copied by Flavius Josephus. The glosses excerpted from Mss. 53 and 86 of Montpellier constitute the Latin version of the same Greek source as the one of the Sothis Book:

CHRONICLE OF EUSEBIUS MSS. MTP 53 (1) ET 86 (2)	SOTHIS BOOK N. 46
1. <i>Aegyptus quae prius Aeria dicebatur ab Egipto tunc sibi (sic) regnante nomen accepit secundum quosdam historiographos.</i> 2. <i>Aegyptus quae prius Aeria dicebatur ab Aegypto tunc ibi regnante nomen accepit cui datum est regnum ejecto Danao.</i>	Ραμεσσῆς δὲ, ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ αὐτοῦ, ὁ καὶ Αἴγυπτος καλούμενος, ἐβασίλευσεν Αἰγύπτου ἔτη ξη΄, μετονομάσας τὴν χώραν Αἴγυπτον τῷ ἰδίῳ ὀνόματι, ἥτις πρότερον Μεστραία, παρ' Ἑλλήσι δὲ Αἰρία ἐλέγετο

The three names of Egypt given by Sothis Book re-focus the problem around three different aspects of Egypt: the Hebraic (Mestraiā = Mizraïm), the Greek (*Aeria*), and the Egyptian (Aigyptos). So behind the mythological movement from Egypt to Argolide (by means of the Danaos-Armaïs and Aigyptos-Sethos/Ramesses' myth), there is in the background a complex problem of nationalism.

³⁵ Fragment 53a-b; cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 378-79, 380-81. I do not deal with the very complicated question of Egyptian chronology in the different excerpts of Manetho. I refer the reader to Donald B. Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-Books: A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History* (SSEA Publications IV; Mississauga: Benben Publications, 1986). I insist only on the fact that Armaïs is Horemheb, meanwhile Ramesses is Ramses I, his successor. But a historical gap occurred so that the name Ramesses (i.e., Ramses I), has been transferred onto Ramses II (i.e., the successor of Sethi I (= Sethos). For the English translation of this excerpt, see Waddell, *Manetho*, 117.

Greeks and the hellenized Egyptians in Ptolemaeus Philadelphus' time, and let us summarize what we know:

The comparison between the passages of Flavius Josephus and the epitome clearly shows that it was Manetho's purpose to graft the Argive myth by introducing it into the chronological framework of the Egyptian history. Why would this purpose be important?

It is clear that this Greek interpretation of Danaos and Aigyptos is groundless and that the myth, from our point of view, displaces history. Like his contemporaries, Manetho can be considered a careful reader of Aeschylus, for there is no doubt that Aeschylus used the Danaos and Aigyptos myth as his major source in describing the origin of all the Greek people. In his plays, the Greek author established a body of mythical relationships between Egypt and Greece. For Greeks of all origins, the Argolide myths underscore the national cohesiveness of the Hellenic nation, for the Danaos legend had become "the mythical deed of the Dorian dynasties,"³⁶ which united Greece and Egypt into a common destiny making possible the commercial opening of Egypt to Greece.³⁷ This framework grounds the Greco-Egyptian relationship in the mythic past. Moreover, the history of Danaos and Aigyptos appears on several occasions in the *Inquiry* of Herodotus. Manetho thus appears relatively non-controversial when, through bifocalization, he brings these figures closer to the story of famous Egyptian kings. When considering Aeschylus' work for the Greek collective consciousness, however, this convergence might appear acceptable if we keep in mind the distance separating the contemporaries of Philadelphus from the events in question, particularly since the convergence rests on the authority of Herodotus³⁸ (of whom Manetho wrote a critical review).³⁹

The Argive myth is not merely based on Danaos and Aigyptos. Its vestiges are well anchored in Manetho's work. One can see this connection in a few elements of the *Aegyptiaca* that have survived in the version of Eusebius' *Chronicle* translated into Latin by Jerome. Thus the story of the cow Io,⁴⁰ which is included in the mythical story of the Canopic branch of the Nile (the most economically significant branch of the Nile Delta for the Greeks and Egyptians), foretells the Argive myth and brings the reader to

³⁶ Eschyle, *Tragédies. Les Suppliantes, les Perses, les Sept contre Thèbes, Prométhée enchaîné, Orestie* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1962), 28–29.

³⁷ Ruth Ilsley Hicks, "Egyptian Elements in Greek Mythology," in *TrAPhAs* XCIII (1962): 90–108 = Jean Leclant and Gisèle Clerc, *Inventaire bibliographique des Isiaca (IBIS)* (OLA 18, Leiden: Brill, 1974), n. 586.

³⁸ II, 91, 98, 171, 182; VII, 94.

³⁹ *Criticism of Herodotus* (Πρὸς Ἡρόδοτον); cf. Waddell, *Manetho*, 204–5; Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 924–34.

⁴⁰ Robert Graves, *Les Mythes grecs* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1976), 157–60.

the legend of Isis-Io.⁴¹ We learn that it is from the union of Io with Telegonos,⁴² whom she married in Egypt on her return journey, that she gives birth to Epaphos, who through *interpretatio* is associated with Apis,⁴³ the sacred oracular bull of Memphis.

A Latin excerpt of the 1512 Tournai edition of the Eusebius *Chronicle*⁴⁴ reflects the existence of a Greek original. This excerpt indicates that Epaphos is the son of Io and Zeus (Jupiter).⁴⁵ This indication comes just before the passage concerning Danaos and Aegyptos we have discussed earlier. The Montpellier Mss. 32 and 86 offer another passage echoing the Busiris myth found among several authors, notably Diodorus Siculus.⁴⁶ This text⁴⁷ indicates that the Egyptian Epaphos had a daughter Libya married to Busiris, son of Neptune.⁴⁸ It seems that this passage is derived from a set speech

⁴¹ This is expressed in a fresco of the Isis temple in Pompei. See Danielle Bonneau, *La crue du Nil, divinité égyptienne à travers mille ans d'histoire (332 av. -641 ap. J.-C. d'après les auteurs grecs et latins, et les documents des époques ptolémaïque, romaine et byzantine)* (Paris: Bonneau, 1964), 269–70; and Jean-Claude Grenier, "Isis assise devant Io," in *Alla Ricerca di Iside, La parola del Passato (Rivista di Studi antichi XLIX: I-II; Napoli: Macchiaroli editore, 1994)*, 22–36.

⁴² The "glosses" of Mss. 86 (1) and 32 (2) of Montpellier quote Telegonos (Fol. 30) just before the reigns of Danaos and Egyptos: (1) [Under the 5th year] *In Egypto regnavit Telegonus*; and (2) [Under the 6th year] *Secunda Egypto regnavit Telegonus horis pastoris filius septimus Abinacho*. Cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 382–83.

⁴³ Tournai, 1512 (see note 21 above).

⁴⁴ Cf. Herodotus, II, 153; III, 27. Ivan M. Linforth, *Epaphos and Egyptian Apis*, University of California Publications in Classical Philology 2, n. 5 (1910). A bibliography on Apis is found in Jean Vercoutter, *Textes biographiques du Sérapéum de Memphis. Contribution à l'étude des stèles votives du Sérapéum* (Paris: Librairie ancienne Honoré Champion, 1962), xvii–xix; and Michel Malinine, Georges Posener, and Jean Vercoutter, *Catalogue des stèles du Sérapéum de Memphis* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale de France, 1968). The cult of Apis is supposed to appear during the reign of king Kaiechôs of the 2nd dynasty (Manetho, Fragments 8–10, cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 115–20); cf. also Aelianus (*De nat. animal.* XI, 10). On Apis, see Jean Vercoutter, "Apis," in *LÄ I*, cols. 338–50; Pietschmann, in *PW, RE I/2* (1894): cols. 2807–9; R. L. Vos, "Variorum Coloribus Apis: Some Remarks on the Colours of Apis and other Sacred Animals," in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Jan Quaegebeur*, ed. Willy Clarysse, Antoon Schoors, and Harco Willems (*OLA* 84–85; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 709–18; and William K. Simpson, "A Running of the Apis in the Reign of 'Aha and Passages in Manetho and Aelian," in *Orientalia* 26 (1957): 139–42.

⁴⁵ Tournai, 1512, Fol. 30.

⁴⁶ Tournai, 1512, Fol. 30: *Epaphus filius Io et Jovis Memphyn condidit cum Aegypto secunde regnaret*. Cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 382–83.

⁴⁷ I, IV, 27. On Isocrates' Busiris, see Phiroze Vasunia, *The Gift of the Nile. Hellenizing Egypt from Aeschylus to Alexander* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2001), 183–215.

⁴⁸ *Busiris* 5. Mss. 86 (1) and 32 (2): (1) (Under the year XXVI). *Busiris Neptuni et Libiae Epaphae filiae apud vicinia Nilo loca tyrannidem exercet transeuntes hospites crudeliscere interficiens*; (2) *An 20. Busiris Neptuni et Libiae Epaphae filiae apud vicinia Nilo loca tyrannidem exercet transeuntes hospites crudeliscere interficiens*.

⁴⁹ Such an excerpt from Isocrat could be used by Manetho inasmuch the school of Isocrat (ca. 338 B.C.E.) could have been at the origin of the intellectual formation of the Egyptian author.

entitled *Busiris* and written by Isocrates the Athenian. The story brings us back once more to Aeschylus, for Epaphos had already been introduced in Aeschylus' *Prometheus* and the *Suppliant-women*,⁴⁹ where he appeared as a son of Io.⁵⁰

In the *Suppliant-women*, Argolide is called several times the "country of Apis," thus favoring a relationship with Epaphos, but Aeschylus tries his best to frame this relationship in terms of a contrast between Egypt and Greece insofar as he makes one of his characters state: "Nature has dressed our features differently; the Nile and the Inachos do not feed such races." In another source the same basic contrast is echoed in a discussion of the different eating habits of the Greeks and the Egyptians.⁵¹ But Aeschylus' work and those similar establish a mythological parallel between Egypt and Argos. The Canopic branch is to Egypt what the Inachos is to Argolide.

To return to the theme of this volume, Danaos and Aigyptos undoubtedly place Argos and Egypt in a dual opposition. From the viewpoint of the sources, the opposition between Armaïs-Danaos and Sethos/Ramessès-Aigyptos suggests some dualistic contrasts. And the opposition of these two sovereigns in Manetho echoes Herodotus' story of Sesostris betrayed by his own brother.⁵² In Herodotus' work, even though Sesostris entrusts his brother with Egypt, he nevertheless takes his wife everywhere with him. Thus the problem of adultery found in Manetho is not an issue. When Sesostris returns to Daphne of Pelusius, escaping with the queen from an assassination attempt in which two of their six children died, Sesostris takes his revenge on his brother.⁵³ There is good reason to suppose that Manetho's version of this myth reflects an attempt to counter Herodotus and at the same time replace an Egyptian nationalist tradition.

Isocrat, who carried the art of the Greek language to its zenith (he was the author of now lost *Rhetoric*), was considered to be very valuable in the Hellenistic countries.

⁴⁹ *Prom.* v. 849sq.; *Suppl.*, v. 45 sq., v. 584–89; Aufrère, *L'Odyssée d'Aigyptos. Du Sceptre au Spectre* (Paris: Pages du monde, 2007), 57–68.

⁵⁰ To the end, a fragment of Mss. 32 and 86 of Montpellier inserts (as a gloss) the names of Demeter and Danae in the *Aegyptiaca*: *Eaquae de Demetra quam aiunt esse Isidem et Dane ex qua Perseus nascitur. His sunt gesta temporibus et quae de ea fabulae dicunt.* Cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytyos*, 382–83. Since Perseus belongs to the Argive family, Manetho considers him to be born of Danae. Other glosses add some facets that seem to reinforce the legend of Argos, e.g., the one of Thamyris; cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytyos*, 491.

⁵¹ Cf. Herodotus II, 36, 77. One finds this traditional opposition in Alexandria in the diet of the Hellenes and in the one of the native population. The Greeks drink wine and eat wheat (*Triticum durum*) bread, the Egyptian beer, spelt (*Hordeum vulgare*), and soft wheat (*Triticum sativum dicoccum = olyra*) bread. See Pascale Ballet, *La vie quotidienne à Alexandrie 331–30 avant J.-C.* (Paris: Hachette, 1999), 190–98.

⁵² II, 107.

⁵³ II, 108. In the version of Diodorus (I, LVII, 6–8), the same facts are assigned to Sesoôsis, and the attempted murder takes place "toward Pelusius."

Numerous other Egyptian tales refer to the same dualistic opposition: *Horus and Seth*,⁵⁴ the *Two Brothers*,⁵⁵ and *Truth and Falsehood*.⁵⁶ These works portray the opposition of divine figures as archetypes of Good and Evil. If reconsidered within the framework of a dualistic opposition found throughout religious and profane literature, it is obvious that Manetho's additions to the traditions he inherits are purposeful. Once placed in historical-political context, the *Sinn-plus* of Manetho's additions reveal themselves.

Let us review the documents that have been discussed in order to observe how Manetho sets the stage for the emergence of the Sarapis myth. Like many mythographs, he borrows from the legend of the eponymous hero. He thus subscribes to a Greek fashion, which takes the reader accustomed to the normal mythical process in a slightly different direction. According to some traditions, Zeus was the father of Aigyptos and Danaos.⁵⁷ In this tradition the figure of Zeus unites the Egyptians and the Greeks with a common ancestor.⁵⁸ But this is only one aspect of the origin of the Egyptians and Greeks. The myth revised by Manetho is colored by a nationalistic agenda. By merely evoking the story of Armaïs-Danaos betraying Sethōs/Ramessēs-Aigyptos, Manetho assigns the easy task to the Egypt of Sethōs-Ramessēs, while the pre-Hellenic ancestor, Danaos, assumes the traitor's role echoed in the common Latin saying: *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. Besides, Manetho recognizes in Armaïs (who has depraved manners) the equivalent of Danaos, thus alluding to the Greeks. When arriving at Argos with his fifty daughters,⁵⁹ Armaïs leads a dissolute life. In a sense, the myth of Danaos and Aigyptos renews and adapts the myth of Osiris and Seth, focalizing the struggle between order, legitimacy, and family balance on one hand and chaos, illegitimacy, and moral depravity on the other. In other respects, the story of Aigyptos and Danaos provides the source of a mythical vendetta intended to recall the scattering of the archaic colonies.⁶⁰ Manetho subscribes to the Egyptian version of the myth in which the settlement of the

⁵⁴ Georges Lefebvre, *Romans et contes égyptiens de l'époque pharaonique* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1949), 178–203 = Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 214–23.

⁵⁵ Lefebvre, *Romans et contes égyptiens*, 136–58; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, 203–10.

⁵⁶ Lefebvre, *Romans et contes égyptiens*, 159–68; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II*, 211–13.

⁵⁷ Graves, *Les mythes grecs*, 159.

⁵⁸ According to Diodorus Siculus (I, LI, 3 = F 113), king Aigyptos is considered the son of Thebes, the girl of Busiris, and of Nilus. According to another he is the son of Belos (= Baâl = Zeus according to Herodotus I, 181), who reigned at Chemmis in Upper-Egypt: Graves, *Les mythes grecs*, 165.

⁵⁹ Graves, *Les mythes grecs*, 30.

⁶⁰ Graves, *Les mythes grecs*, 165–69.

world originates from Egypt, an idea spread later by Diodorus.⁶¹ As a matter of fact, the negative features of Danaos are so significant that Hecataeus of Abdera⁶² considers him, along with Cadmos, the chief of the Exodus. According to Diodorus,⁶³ Danaos and his companions began the Jewish people along with Argos and the Colchidians. In spite of his philhellenic relationships, one must not fail to notice that Manetho does maintain nationalistic pretensions over against both Greeks and Jews. Even under a king reputed for a sympathetic attitude towards native subjects, Manetho does not hesitate to highlight the long held, dualistic opposition between Egyptians and Greeks. The mythical history of Danaos and Aigyptos surely echoed with his contemporary culture since Egypt was betrayed by the Greeks. Thus Egypt had many reasons to be on guard. Manetho anchored one of the most important mythico-historical elements from Greek history into his narrative of Egyptian history.

As I indicated at the beginning of this essay, Manetho's pro-Egyptian rhetoric is subtle, but powerful. Manetho absorbs the Egypto-Argive myth into the historical narrative of the Nile Valley. In fact, Manetho adds to the Argive legend the story of king Thuōris⁶⁴ who, through a system of assimilation, becomes the equivalent of Polybus, a hero mentioned by Homer.⁶⁵ Manetho ultimately manipulates mythical history from the founding of Argos to the events through which the Greeks themselves trace their history, the war of Troy.

It is not without reason that Manetho was interested in the Danaos myth. It foreshadows the myth of Sarapis, whose invention Manetho oversaw. Residue of his involvement may be seen in how the Sarapis myth claimed its roots in the Argive myth. The first mention of Sarapis worship appears in a gloss of the Montpellier Mss. 86 and 32 and in the Tournai edition (the Latin text being excerpted from a Greek original): "Apis is considered as the first god in Egypt. Some called him Sarapis."⁶⁶ Another passage consid-

⁶¹ *Bibl. hist.* I, XVIII, 1–2.

⁶² Fragment in Diodore de Sicile, *Bibl. hist.* I, XL, 3 = F 61. On Hecateus, see Oswyn Murray, "Hecataeus of Abdera and Pharaonic Kingship," *JEA* 56 (1970): 141–71; Menahem Stern and Oswyn Murray, "Hecataeus of Abdera and Theophrastus on Jews and Egyptians," *JEA* 59 (1973): 159–68; and Stanley M. Burstein, "Hecateus of Abderah's History of Egypt," in *Life of a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine*, ed. Janet J. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 45–49.

⁶³ *Bibl. hist.* I, XXVIII, 2.

⁶⁴ Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 493.

⁶⁵ *Odyssey* IV, 126.

⁶⁶ Fragment 46c: Mss. Mtp 86 = Mtp 32 [ca. 182] *Apis in Egypto deus primum putatus est. Quem quidam Serapym vocaverunt.* Tournai, 1512 [Fol. 20.] *An(nus) 181. Apis in Aegypto primum deus putatus est. Quem quidam Serapin vocaverunt.* In the *Aegyptiaca* of Manetho, the appearance of Apis is fixed at the 2nd dynasty (Fragments 8–10) (Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 349–50). The *Sothis Book*, n. 32 (Waddell, *Manetho*, 240–42; Aufère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 830–31),

ers Sarapis (Siropis, Serapis, Serapin) as the father of Sesonchosis (Sheshonq I, 22nd Dynasty). The Montpellier manuscripts add a gloss: “The Egyptians, naming him (Sesonchosis) god Seraphin after his death, worshipped him as a god. We say he was the god of the dead world also. We will find this in the Egyptian parchments of Ptolemaeus which are considered as sacred writings.”⁶⁷ The expression “Egyptian parchments of Ptolemaeus” amounts to substantiating the invention of Sarapis under the reign of Ptolemaeus Sôter, but above all the excerpt sets the sacking of Jerusalem attributed to Sheshonq I (Shishaq of the Bible) under the aegis of a god who will appear several centuries later. This could be considered as a perfidy to the Jews to signify that the god who presided over the sacking of the capital city of Judea was the very one whose worship had been set by the first Ptolemaeus. In any case, these passages confirm the relationship between Sarapis and Apis—himself considered as the equivalent of Epaphos of Argos. One could not really assert that it is Manetho who introduced this allusion on Sarapis, since it would be an allusion that escaped the later compilers of his work. Since at least according to Plutarch Manetho was himself the author of a book on Isis, Osiris, Apis, and Sarapis,⁶⁸ there is a significant chance that this passage escaped a more programmatic revision by the Sebennyte priest.

I have already indicated that Sarapis worship developed from a long mythological cycle based on different aspects of the famous Egypto-Argive legend among the Greeks and Hellenized Egyptians. It appeared in Manetho’s work as an artificial means of reconciling Hellenes with the Egyptian priests and putting an end to a mythical vendetta. In my judgment, by introducing a deity whose external features and founding dogmas were easily recognizable by both Greeks and Hellenized Egyptians, Manetho was able to construct the figure of Sarapis in the context of ancient religious tradi-

under the name of Ἀσιήθ, gives a concomitance between the reform of the Egyptian calendar and the fact that a sacred bull is worshipped and called Apis. Meanwhile Fragment 49 (Waddell, *Manetho*, 98–99; Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 361–62) assigns this change to the reign of Σούτης. According to Mnaseas of Patras (fragment preserved in Plutarch, *De Is. et Osir.* 37), Osiris or Egyptian Dionysos, Sarapis, and Egyptian Epaphos were a single being. This inserts Sarapis into the Argive cycle surreptitiously.

⁶⁷ Mss. Mtp 86 = Mtp 32, Fol. 34 r: *Alter (sic) Sesonchosis cuius pater fuit Siropis. Hunc post mortem deum Siraphin Aegyptii nominantes colunt. Quem et inferum deum fuisse dicunt. Hoc in membranis aegyptiacis Ptolomei quae dicitur sacra scriptura invenies.* Tournai, 1512, Fol 51: *Huius Sensencoris Aegyptii regis pater fuit Serapis: hunc ferunt quidam post mortem ab Aegyptiis deum nuncupatum eumque Serapin appellatum.* Cf. Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 548a–b, 555. The proximity between Sesonchosis and Sarapis is evoked in the Alexandrian Romance (cf. *Le Roman d’Alexandre* (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1994), 142–43).

⁶⁸ Fragment 76; cf. Theodoret (Waddell, *Manetho*, 188–89; Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytos*, 862–63).

tions in order to bolster the economic relationship represented by trade on the Canopic branch of the Nile.

It seems likely to me that Ptolemaeus Sōter was actively involved in this process. It is he who had in mind the idea of reconciliation between Greeks and Egyptians. He was probably a silent partner with Manetho (Fragment 80)⁶⁹ in the development of the worship of Sarapis. The combination of the worship of Dionysos with the worship of Sarapis in the Memphite Serapeum of Saqqara,⁷⁰ where we find the first representation of the Egyptian Cerberos of Sarapis,⁷¹ was actually made under Ptolemaeus Sōter's reign and probably reflects the same perspective.

The national tradition maintained by the Egyptian priests was Egyptocentric in the extreme. Thus the translation of the Egyptian sacred books into Greek presented an opportunity for revision and syncretism.⁷² These modifications were probably popular among the Egypto-Alexandrine aristocracy, but hardly reflected the views of traditionalist Egyptians. In closing, it is worth mentioning the story of Joannus Chrysostomus (ca. 345–407) from the era of Ptolemaeus Philadelphus. This narrative claims that the first Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures (the Septuagint) was deposited at the Serapeum's library⁷³ when the librarians of Philadelphus were making an inventory of all the human knowledge. Consequently, when this

⁶⁹ Waddell, *Manetho*, 192–94; Aufrère, *Manéthôn de Sebennytyos*, 870–71.

⁷⁰ Jean-Philippe Lauer and Charles Picard, *Les statues ptolémaïques du Sarapaïon de Memphis* (Paris: Publications de l'Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie de l'Université de Paris III, 1955), 234–45. See also Dorothy J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 190–265. On bulls in the Ptolemaic period, *ibid.*, 284–96. An Apis bull is born in Year 30 of Ptolemaeus II Philadelphus; cf. Heinrich Brugsch, “Der Apis Kreis aus den Zeiten der Ptolemaer nach den hieroglyphischen und demotischen Weihinschriften des Serapeums von Memphis,” *ZÄS* 22 (1884): 110–36 (especially 110–17), and *ZÄS* 24 (1886): 19–40. On the syncretism between Osiris and Dionysos, see Julien Ries, *Osirisme et monde hellénistique* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1980), 57–71; Julien Tondriau, “Tatouages, lierre et syncrétisme” in *Aegyptus* 30 (1950): 57–66; and Jean Hani, *La religion égyptienne dans la pensée de Plutarque* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1976), 166–81, 375–76.

⁷¹ On this deity, see Raffaele Pettazzoni, “Il ‘Cerbero’ di Serapide,” in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à Charles Picard*, II (= RA 1948) (Paris: PUF, 1949), 803–9; Sydney H. Aufrère, “Au sujet des représentation du Cerbère de type ‘macrobien’ et ‘pseudo-macrobien’: une recherche iconologique” in *RANT* 2 (2005): 3–40.

⁷² Sydney H. Aufrère, “Manéthôn de Sebennytyos, médiateur de la culture sacerdotale du Livre sacré: vers de nouveaux axes de recherche,” in *Transferts culturels et droits dans le monde grec et hellénistique. Ilèmes Rencontres internationales sur les transferts culturels dans l'Antiquité méditerranéenne*, Reims, 14–17 mai 2008, ed. Bernard Legras (forthcoming).

⁷³ Joannes Chrysostomus, *Advers. Jud.* I, 6 = F 611. On the story of the Greek translation of the Bible, see Marguerite Harl, Gilles Dorival, and Olivier Munnich, *La Bible grecque des Septante. Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien* (Paris: Cerf ed, 1994). See Cecile Dogniez and Marguerite Harl, *La Bible des Septante. Le Pentateuque d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Cerf ed., 2001). According to the *Letter of Aristeas*, the first copy would have been deposited in the Library. Cf. Harl, *La Bible des Septante*, 5.

sacred deposit was placed at the disposal of Hellenized Egyptian nationalists like Manetho, some troublesome historical narratives came to light, particularly the Exodus. In light of these biblical accounts, Manetho became devoted to another great project of: the legendary Moses-Osarseph myth (Fragment 54).⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Cf. Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); and Youri Volokhine, “À la recherche de Moïse,” in *Égypte, Afrique & Orient* 27 (2002): 3–14.

Prods Oktor Skjærvø

Zoroastrian Dualism

The Sources

The ancient Iranian religion is commonly referred to either as Zoroastrianism, Mazdaism, or Mazdayasnanism. Its followers are called Zoroastrians, Mazdeans, or Mazdayasnians. The first set of terms is derived from the name of Zarathustra, which in Greek was distorted by popular etymology connecting it with *astēr* (“star”) to Zoroaster. The second set of terms is derived from Old Iranian Mazdayasna, which literally means “one who offers sacrifices¹ to Ahura Mazdâ,” the supreme god in Zoroastrianism.

The oldest Zoroastrian texts are the *Avesta*, a body of “texts” transmitted orally until they were written down under the Sasanians (ca. 500–600 C.E.) in a script invented for the purpose of capturing the exact phonetic form of their recitation. The *Avesta* contains two chronologically distinct groups of texts, the *Young* (or *Younger*) *Avesta*, which contains miscellaneous, mostly ritual, texts,² and the *Old Avesta*,³ which contains the five hymns sometimes

¹ The term sacrifice is used here without necessarily implying immolation of a sacrificial victim; rather it is used to denote ritual offerings to gods and other entities in the divine world. See, e.g., J. Henninger, “Sacrifice,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade ((16 vols.; New York and London: Macmillan, 1987), 12:544–45. This is not to say that Zoroastrians did not sacrifice animals, but the *yasna* sacrifice involves no killing of animals today. The verb *yaza-* is ambiguous, taking as its direct object both the deities to which the ritual is directed and the objects offered to them.

² The principal texts are: the *Yasna*, literally “sacrifice,” which is the text accompanying the daily ritual; the *yašts*, which are hymns to individual deities; the *Videvdad* (*Vendidad*), which contains instructions about how to deal with pollution; and various other texts. There are no up-to-date and reliable translations of the entire *Avesta*. The old translations in James Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta* (3 vols., Paris, 1892–93, repr. 1960), and in the *Sacred Books of the East*, as well as in Fritz Wolff, *Avesta: Die heiligen Bücher der Parsen* (Strassburg: Trübner, 1910; repr. Berlin: Gruyter, 1960), based upon Christian Bartholomae’s *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg: Trübner, 1904; repr. Berlin, 1961), are out-dated in many respects and should be used with caution by those not familiar with Avestan. There are, however, several modern translations of parts of the *Avesta* that can be used. William W. Malandra, *An Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion: Readings from the Avesta and the Achaemenid Inscriptions* (Minneapolis: University of Michigan Press, 1983) is a useful anthology. There are no generally available introductions to Avestan. An *Introduction* made by myself for teaching purposes has long circulated freely in the academic community. It has been regularly updated, so anybody interested should make sure to get the latest version.

³ The general remarks made in the preceding note hold for the *Gāthās* in particular. The main post-World War II translations included the following texts. Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre: Étude critique avec une traduction commentée des Gāthā* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1948) is in the

referred to in the *Young Avesta* as “the five *Gāthās* (or songs) of Zarathustra” (*Yasna* 57.8). Since there are no references in the *Avesta* to historical events and no references to the *Avesta* in ancient datable sources, it cannot be dated exactly; on the basis of linguistic considerations it is possible to assign its oldest parts to the second half of the second millennium B.C.E.⁴ and the later parts to the first half of the first millennium B.C.E.⁵

Other Zoroastrian texts include, first, the inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings, composed in Old Persian, the “grandparent” of modern Persian. These are the earliest Iranian texts that can be dated exactly (late sixth to

main a modern version of Christian Bartholomae’s outdated *Die Gatha’s des Awesta: Zarathustra’s Verspredigten* (Strassburg: Trübner, 1905). Helmut Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra* (2 vols.; Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1959) is a thoroughly revised translation based upon the progress made in Avestan studies since Bartholomae; among other things, in this translation, many of Bartholomae’s unfounded grammatical and semantic analyses are revised (for some examples, see footnote 111, below); most importantly, the terminology that can be shown through comparison with Old Indic to be ritual in nature is maintained as such (rather than being interpreted away as metaphors). Stanley Insler, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra* (Acta Iranica 8; Tehran and Liège: Brill, 1975) adds new insights, but is somewhat marred by frequent textual emendations. Jean Kellens and Eric Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques* (3 vols.; Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1988, 1990, 1991) represent an attempt to take the ritual interpretation begun by Humbach to its extreme consequences. Helmut Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra and the Other Old Avestan Texts* (in coll. with Josef Elfenbein and Prods O. Skjærvø; 2 vols.; Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1991) and Helmut Humbach and Pallan Ichaporia, *The Heritage of Zarathustra: A New Translation of His Gāthās* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1994) are updated versions in English of Humbach, *Die Gathas des Zarathustra*.

⁴ See the Appendix on the “date of Zarathustra.”

⁵ The Young Avestan language is more or less at the same stage as the earliest Old Persian and the *Young Avesta* can therefore be assigned roughly to the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was commonly believed that the *Avesta* was post-Achaemenid, something which has been disproved by what we know today about Iranian languages. Nevertheless, it is still often stated that the *Videvdad* is much “later” than the rest of the *Avesta*, perhaps even from Seleucid or Parthian times. The basis for this assumption is Henning’s statement that the Avestan system of short-distance measures “so closely resembles the common Greco-Roman system, as a whole and in all details, that its foreign origin can be taken for granted” (Walter Bruno Henning, “An Astronomical Chapter of the Bundahishn,” *JRAS* [1942], 235–36; cited in Ilya Gershevitch, “Old Iranian Literature” [*HdO* 1, 4, 2, vol. 1; Leiden and Cologne: Brill, 1968], 27–28; Mary Boyce, “Parthian Writings and Literature,” in *CHI* 3/2:1159; and Mary Boyce and Frantz Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism*. Vol. 3. *Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule* [with a contribution by Roger Beck; *HdO* 1, 8, 1, 2, 2, vol. 3; Leiden and Cologne: Brill, 1991], 68 n. 78). Henning is not always cited as the source of this assumption, which is often stated as a fact (e.g., Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* [2d ed.; London and New York: Routledge, 2001], 94–95). Henning’s statement, however, disregards the fact that the measure *arashni* “ell” (Old Indic *aratni*, English *ell*, etc.) is used in Darius’s building inscription from Susa, and other information about ancient measures in general, for instance, in Egypt and the Bible, and in Indo-European languages in particular. Thus, it is quite likely that the Avestan measures are inherited, as they are found in numerous other Indo-European languages. Here, as in the case of the date of Zarathustra (see below), a mere statement by Henning has created opinions in the history of Iranian religions that, to some scholars, are not to be queried.

fifth centuries B.C.E.).⁶ Next come the inscriptions of the first Sasanian kings from the third century C.E., in which we find much important religious material.⁷

The largest corpus of Zoroastrian texts consists of the so-called Pahlavi books, texts written in Middle Persian, or Pahlavi,⁸ the “parent” of modern Persian (Farsi).⁹ Here we find famous texts such as the *Bundahišn*,¹⁰ the *Dēnkard*,¹¹ the *Pahlavi Rivayat*,¹² and the *Škand-gumānīg vizār*,¹³ as well as the Pahlavi translations of the *Avesta*. The Pahlavi texts, although written

⁶ Roland G. Kent, *Old Persian Grammar: Texts, Lexicon* (2d rev. ed.; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1953) contains texts and translations of the complete corpus known then. The most recent editions are Rüdiger Schmitt, *The Bisitun Inscriptions of Darius the Great* (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum I, I, Texts I, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1991) and *The Old Persian Inscriptions of Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis* (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum I, I, Texts II, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2000). On Achaemenid religion see most recently Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “The Achaemenids and the *Avesta*,” in *Birth of the Persian Empire* (Vol. I; ed. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Sarah Stewart; London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 52–84 (with references).

⁷ See David Neil MacKenzie, “Kerdir’s Inscription,” in Georgina Herrmann, *The Sasanian Rock Reliefs at Naqsh-e Rostam* (Iranische Denkmäler, Lief. 13, Reihe II: Iranische Felsreliefs, I; Berlin: Reimer, 1989), 35–72; Philip Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Ka’ba-i Zardušt* (Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum, part 3, vol. 1, texts 1; London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1999).

⁸ Written in a very cursive version of the script used in the third-century inscriptions, which derived from Aramaic. Many Pahlavi texts (and some in modern Persian) were transcribed using the Avestan alphabet; these are called Pazand.

⁹ The translations by Edward W. West in *Pahlavi Texts*, in *Sacred Books of the East* (ed. F. Max Müller) are useful to gain an overview, but should be used for scholarly purpose only if one is familiar with Pahlavi.

¹⁰ The old edition of the *Bundahišn* with translation by Behramgore Tehmurasp Anklesaria, *Zand-ākāsh: Iranian or Greater Bundahišn* (Bombay: Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha, 1956) can be safely used only if one is familiar with Pahlavi (chapters and sections are usually cited according to this edition). Translations of individual chapters can be found scattered throughout the secondary literature.

¹¹ Modern translations include, of book 3: Jean-Pierre de Menasce, *Le troisième livre du Dēnkard* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1973); book 5: Jaleh Amouzgar and Ahmad Tafazzoli, *Le cinquième livre du Dēnkard* (Studia Iranica. Cahier 23; Paris: Association pour l’Avancement des études iraniennes, 2000); books 5 and 7: Marijan Molé, *La légende de Zoroastre selon les textes pehlevi* (Travaux de l’Institut d’études iraniennes de l’Université de Paris 3; Paris: Klincksieck, 1967); book 6: Shaul Shaked, *The Wisdom of the Sasanian Sages (Dēnkard VI), by Aturpāt-i Ēmētān*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Persian Heritage Series 34; Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979). Numerous translations of texts from books 8 and 9 concerning Zarathustra are also found in Marijan Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l’Iran ancien* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963).

¹² This is a text that contains a series of answers by Iranian priests to questions asked by their fellow Zoroastrians in India. See Alan V. Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* (2 vols.; Det Kongelig Danske Videnskabernes Selskab: Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser 60; Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1990).

¹³ See Jean-Pierre de Menasce, *Škand-gumānīg vizār: La solution décisive des doutes: Texte pazand-pehlevi transcrit, traduit et commenté* (Fribourg en Suisse: Librairie de l’Université, 1945).

only in the ninth-tenth centuries, encapsulate the orally transmitted knowledge of the priests of that time and so contain material that reaches far back into the history of Zoroastrianism. It is in texts such as these that we find Zoroastrian theologians discussing issues of dualistic thought.

In addition to these sources, we have descriptions and statements about the Iranian religion in a variety of secondary sources, most importantly the Greek and Latin authors, but also the Islamic and Armenian historians and compilers of information about religion.¹⁴

Iranian dualism

There are two large bipartitions in Zoroastrian cosmology.¹⁵

First, there is what we may call *cosmogonic dualism*, which refers to the fact that the contents of the world were made and (dis)arranged by two primordial entities: the one good, the other bad; the one causing light and life, the other causing darkness and death. The world itself was made by the good entity, Avestan Ahura Mazdâ, the All-knowing Ruler, in the form of a well-ordered cosmos, as a device for fighting the opponent, the Evil (or Destructive) Spirit (*angra mainyu*),¹⁶ and in the end overcoming and incapacitating him for ever.

Second, there is what we may call *cosmic dualism*, which refers to the division of the world into two: the world of thought and that of living beings (or the world of living beings with bones, the bony existence).¹⁷ The world of thought is that which cannot be apprehended by the usual human senses of sight and touch and contains the divine beings, good and bad, as well as entities such as the sky, sun, and other things no human has ever

¹⁴ See Abraham Valentine Williams Jackson, *Zoroaster the Prophet of Ancient Iran* (London: Macmillan, 1899), 226–87; Carolus (Carl Christian) Clemen, *Fontes historiae religionum ex auctoribus graecis et latinis collectos subsidiis Societatis rhenaenae promovendis litteris* (Fasc. 1; Bonn: Marcus and Weber, 1920); William S. Fox and R. E. K. Pemberton, *Passages in Greek and Latin Literature Relating to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism Translated into English* (Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute 14, 1929).

¹⁵ The Sasanian cosmogony is most easily accessible in Robin C. Zaehner, *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955, repr. New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1972), which contains the text and translation of all the relevant chapters from the *Bundahishn*, as well as other Pahlavi texts. Note that Zaehner's paragraphs do not necessarily correspond to those in Anklesaria's edition.

¹⁶ The word "spirit" (Avestan *mainiiu*) is not used here in the sense of "ghost" or similar; it is a purely mental creative event, which in the context of composing poetry comes close to "inspiration." On the meaning of *mainiiu* in Old Avestan, see Jean Kellens, *Essays on Zarathustra and Zoroastrianism*, trans. and ed. Prods Oktor Skjærvø (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda, 2000), xiii. The precise meaning of the epithet *angra* may refer to his blackish color or, perhaps, to his destructive nature. In the *Avesta* he is usually called "full of destruction" (*pouru.mahrka*, Pahlavi *pur-marg* "full of death"), and in the Pahlavi texts he is, in addition, commonly referred to as "stinking" or "foul," which could also be the meaning of the older term.

¹⁷ I avoid the terms "spiritual" and "material" because of their heavy semantic contents.

come close to. The world of living beings is what its name implies. Both worlds were established by Ahura Mazdâ, but were subsequently infiltrated by evil.

In this doubly bipartite world, all beings, divine or human, choose the camp to which they want to belong in the cosmic battle. Their choices affect not only their own existences, but also the destiny of the whole world.¹⁸

“Creation” in the Old Avesta

In the *Old Avesta*, the fashioning (*tash-*, *thvars-*)¹⁹ and setting in place, ordering (*dâ-*) of the elements of the world is ascribed to Ahura Mazdâ, sometimes assisted by individual craftsmen. For instance, we hear of “the carpenter who fashioned the cow” (*gaosh tashan*) and the “the carpenter” (*thvarshhtar*) who fashioned (*tatasha*) her.

In addition, Ahura Mazdâ apparently produced several objects by his thought, by *thinking* them. Among these were the cosmic principle of Order (*aša*)²⁰ itself and the heavenly lights that can be seen by men (*Yasna* 31.19 “he who thought (*mantā*) Order, he the knowing world-healer”; *Yasna* 31.7 “he who first thought those (thoughts): The free spaces are blending with lights!”).

Finally, Ahura Mazdâ is said to have *engendered* various objects, among them the *ahu*, that is, the new existence or the new world (*Yasna* 43.5 “at the (re)birth of the existence”) and the cosmic Order (*Yasna* 44.3 “what man is, by his engendering, the first father of Order?”; *Yasna* 47.2 “he is the father of Order, he Mazdâ”).²¹

¹⁸ The dualistic worldview is also reflected in the Avestan and Pahlavi vocabularies, as there are two sets of words for both the acts of creation and some of the objects created, notably in the divine and human realms. Thus, gods in the good realm were called *ahuras* (“lords”) or *yazatas* (literally, “(gods) worthy of receiving sacrifices”), while the “old gods” (the *daēwas*) were relegated to the realm of the evil creator. Thus, there are two words for eyes, hands, feet, motion, etc.; *daēwic* motion, for instance, is usually described as “falling all over, scrambling, rushing,” etc. The “ahuric” vocabulary is the normal (“unmarked”) one, while the “*daēwic*” vocabulary contains special (“marked”), sometimes more archaic, terms. For instance, ahuric *čashman* “eye,” modern Persian *čashm*; *daēwic* *ashi* = Old Indic *akshi*.

¹⁹ The terms *tash-* and *thvars-* may refer to the use of different tools, such as axes and knives.

²⁰ Avestan *asha* (Old Indic *ṛta*), sometimes translated and interpreted as “truth.” For a discussion, see Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Truth and Deception in Ancient Iran,” in *Jamshid Soroush Soroushian Commemorative Volume*, vol. II: *Ataš-e dorun - The Fire Within*, ed. Farrokh Vajifdar and Carlo Cereti (Bloomington, Ind.: First Books Library, 2003), 383–434.

²¹ Traditionally, all these verbs meaning “fashion,” “place,” and “engender” have been rendered by “create” (e.g., Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 1, *The Early Period* (HdO 1, 8, 1, 2, 2A; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 195: *tash-* “create”; 196: *dâ-* both “establish” and “create”), implying *creatio ex nihilo*, a concept that makes its appearance relatively late in Western thought. What exactly the word *dāman* means, which is commonly rendered as “creation, creature,” is not certain. The version of the cosmogonic myth that is perhaps the oldest appears to be a weaving myth; thus, the “creations” may be the fabrics of the divine weavers. See also Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Poetic

Ahura Mazdâ is also said to be the father of Heaven and Earth (*Yasna* 45.4 “the father of Good Thought (= heaven)”; *Yasna* 45.4 “while his daughter is Humility (= the earth) of good works”).²² The cosmic Lie or Deception (*druj*), too, has its offspring, its “brood” (*Yasna* 51.10 “that one is the brood (*hunush*) of the *dâmi* [weaver?] of the Lie”).²³ This birth scenario plays a focal role not only in the Old Avestan creation myth, but also in the later versions of the myth, as we shall see below.

The newborn “existence” or “world” (*ahu*) can be the “first” or the “last.” The “first existence” is the one fashioned and ordered by Ahura Mazdâ when he first eliminated chaos, and the “last existence” is the one that will be permanent and no longer replaced by that of the powers of evil, when the Evil Spirit and his ilk will be banished for ever. Both the first and the last existences are unique, as opposed to the past, present, and future ones of (mankind), which are recurring phenomena.

These “existences” or “worlds” are also characterized as “best” and “worst,” which are the rewards of humans, presumably after death. In accordance with their behavior in this world, they will have the best or worst existence, respectively:

Yasna 30.4

...and how the existence will be at last:

the worst (existence will be that) of those possessed by the Lie, while for the sustainer of Order (there will be) best thought.

The two creator gods

In the *Young Avesta* we find both of the Old Avestan scenarios: creation by fashioning and ordering *and* creation by birth. In addition, the world was configured by *two* creators, one good and one evil. Again, most often, it is Ahura Mazdâ who is said to have fashioned and set in place the “creations” (*dâman*), but we now also have references to the two *spirits* as setting in place the “creations”:

and Cosmic Weaving in Ancient Iran. Reflections on Avestan *vahma* and *Yasna* 34.2,” in *Haptaçahaptâitiš. Festschrift for Fridrik Thordarson*, ed. Dag Haug and Eirik Welo (Oslo: Novus, 2005), 267–79.

²² On Ahura Mazdâ and Ârmaiti representing heaven and earth, see Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Ahura Mazdâ and Ârmaiti, Heaven and Earth, in the Old Avesta,” in *Indic and Iranian Studies in Honor of Stanley Insler on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (special issue ed. Joel P. Brereton and Stephanie W. Jamison) *JAOS* 122/2 (2002): 399–410; see also Shaked’s brief remark in Shaul Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation: Varieties of Religion in Sasanian Iran* (Jordan lectures 1991, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1994), 61: “the fact that Ohrmazd stands in this context for the sky, which is often conceived to be in sexual relationship with the earth.”

²³ In *Videvdad* chapter 18, Sraosha, the greatest fighter of the powers of darkness, is told by the Lie how she is made pregnant by “four males.”

Yasna 57.17 = *Yasht* 13.76

...when the two spirits established²⁴ the creations:
the Life-giving (*spenta*)²⁵ Spirit and the Evil one.

The earliest Western account of this myth is that reported by Plutarch (first-second centuries C.E.), in whose *Isis and Osiris* the two creators (*dēmiourgoi*) are said to be “rival craftsmen” (*antitekhnoi*).²⁶ The myth about the rival craftsmen is also attested in the Zoroastrian tradition. In the *Videvdad*,²⁷ a long text concerned primarily with the origin of evil in the world and how to fight it, evil takes the form of pollution by various kinds of dead matter—blood, corpses, etc.—which must be cleansed following certain strict rituals. The first chapter of the *Videvdad* is devoted to a description of how Ahura Mazdâ, as part of his ordering of the world, established the various countries and how, afterward, the Evil Spirit, Angra Mainyu, in opposition, produced illnesses, natural plagues, and evil human behavior.²⁸

The word used here for the creative activity of the good creator is *fra-thvars-* “to cut forth,” that is, as an expert carpenter, while the word used for the activity of the Evil Spirit, *fra-kernt-*, also meaning “to cut forth,” presumably refers to craft-less whittling. Elsewhere in the *Avesta*, the creation act is expressed by the verbs *dâ-* “place, set in proper place,” or *fra-dâ*, literally, “set forth.” At the beginning of the daily morning *yasna* ritual, Ahura Mazdâ is invoked as the one “who has set (*dada*) us in (our)

²⁴ The form (*daiditem*) is an optative, but it is used to express repeated action in the past; hence the cosmogonic act by the two spirits is a recurrent regeneration of the world, rather than an exclusively primordial act. See Karl Hoffmann, “Präteritaler Optativ im Altiranischen,” in *Aufsätze zur Iranistik*, ed. Johanna Narten (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1976), 2:610.

²⁵ The word *spenta*, often rendered as “holy, bounteous,” etc., means literally “endowed with *spên* ‘swelling (power),’” “life-giving, (re)vitalizing.” It is from the root *spā-/sū-* (Old Indic *śvā-/śū-*) “to swell,” that is, in religious context, presumably “swell with the juices of fertility and life.” (It is the opposite of “dried out, meager, etc.,” as probably implied in *Yasna* 29.7 “*he* [the Ahura] is life-giving for the meager ones by his ordinance.”) Derivatives include *sawa(h)*, Old Indic *śávas* “(life-giving) strength”; *sūra*, Old Indic *śūrā* “endowed with (life-giving) strength”; and *saoshya-* (future active) “be going to fill with life-giving strength,” with the present participle *saoshyant* “he who will make (the world) swell,” an epithet of the successful sacrificer. The common rendering of *saoshyant* as “savior” evokes notions that are foreign to the actual function of the term as *sacrificer*.

²⁶ Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, 369D–370C; see also Clemen, *Fontes*, 48–49; Fox and Pemberton, *Passages*, 52; cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 449.

²⁷ The name means literally “the established rules for how to keep the *daêwas* away, how to discard the *daêwas*” (not “against the *daêwas*,” as commonly stated). See Emile Benveniste, “Que signifie *Videvdad*?”, in *W. B. Henning Memorial Volume*, ed. Mary Boyce and Ilya Gershevitch (London: Lund Humphries, 1970), 37–42. The *daêwas* are the “old gods,” deities that side with the evil creator (see below).

²⁸ Note that the two spirits have their standard epithets of *spenta* (or *spanyah-*, comparative, to denote one of a pair) and *angra* already in the *Old Avesta* (*Yasna* 45.2 “And now I shall say forth the two spirits at the beginning of the existence, of which two the life-giving one (*spanyā*) shall say to the evil one (*angrem*)”), but it is not clear whether they are “creators.”

place, who has fashioned (*tatasha*) us” (*Yasna* 1.1, in *hysteron proteron* for rhythmical reasons).

Detailed accounts of the Iranian creation myths are not found until relatively recent times. Plutarch’s is the earliest, in fact. After this, we have to wait for the Pahlavi books for complete presentations. In the *Avesta* itself, unfortunately, we have only fragments of cosmogonies and, in the oldest texts, hardly more than allusions. In the following, I can present only some of this scattered information.

The worlds of thought and of living beings (with bones)

The second bipartition of the Zoroastrian cosmos is that between two levels of existence: the world of thought and that of living beings. The *ahu* that is (re)born is of two kinds, for which the Old Avestan terms are “the one of thought” and “the one with bones” (e.g., *Yasna* 28.2 “the rewards (*âyapta*) of the two *ahus*, the one with bones and that of thought”; *Yasna* 43.3 “of this *ahu* with bones and (of that) of thought”; *Yasna* 53.6 “you (incompetent ones) are destroying the world of thought”). It is the production and birth of the *ahu* with bones that requires the assistance of the human *yasna*-ritual, for only humans have bones and life breath (vital energy) to contribute to making the regenerated *ahu* come alive as the “world of the living.” This contribution is in fact made by the sacrificers themselves, the first of whom was Zarathustra in the Old Iranian cosmogonic myth:

Yasna 33.14

Thus, Zarathustra is giving as gift the life breath²⁹ of his own body as the foremost share (of his sacrifice) and of his good thought to Mazdâ...

Yasna 43.16

Thus, he there, O Ahura, Zarathustra, (it is your) inspiration (*mainyu*) (that) he prefers, whichever, O Mazdâ, (is) your most life-giving one.

May Order have bones (together) with life breath (and be) powerful!

May Ârmaiti (= the Earth) be in (Ahura Mazdâ’s) command and in full sight of the sun!

May she by (her) actions/works³⁰ give (me my) reward for (my) good thought!

In Young Avestan, the terms are: *mainyawa* “of the *mainyu*,” that is, that which can only be reached mentally, by “inspiration” (*mainyu*); and *gaêthiya*, that which belongs to/contains living beings (*gaêthâ*). The term *mainyawa*, in the large majority of its attestations, is used of “gods (*yaza-*

²⁹ I assume *ushtëna-* is from **ushta-(a)na-* “vitalized breath,” from the root *vaz-* (Indo-European **weǵh-*: Latin *vigor*, etc.) also seen in Old Persian **vazar-/vashn-* “greatness” and *vazarka-* “great,” and the common root for breath *an-* (*animus*, etc.).

³⁰ By which she produces everything needed to nourish those who live upon her.

ta) in the world of thought,” “bad gods (*daêwas*) in the world of thought,” and “the Lie (*druj*) [= cosmic deception] in the world of thought.” Occasionally the term is used about objects in “the world of thought” (Mithra’s coursers and weapons). The term *gaêthiya* is used about “gods (*yazata*) in the world of living beings” and things in this world, “the world of living beings with bones” (*astwaitî gaêthâ*).³¹ The two kinds of (temporal) existence are “the (temporal) existence (*sti*) of the world of thought” and “the (temporal) existence of the world of living beings.” In addition, the terms “belonging to, made by the Life-giving/Evil Spirit” (*spentô.-mainyawa* and *angrô. mainyawa*) are used, respectively, about the stars and the good “creations” in general and about the evil “creations” in general, notably the *xrafstars*, evil animals.³² The corresponding Pahlavi terms are *mênôy* and *gêñy*, which are learned loans from Avestan.³³

Although both these worlds were established and ordered by Ahura Mazdâ, they are now divided into camps of opposing good and evil powers. This, in fact, is their reason for being: they were created as battlefields for the two powers with the plan that in the end the powers of evil would be overcome and annihilated and for ever cast back into the darkness whence they came.³⁴

There is a special relationship between the two worlds in the fact that the world of thought contains the “models” (*ratus*) for all things in the world of living beings. In the daily sacrifice, which is a regeneration ritual, these “models” in the world of thought are reassembled and arranged by means of their representatives in the world of living beings in order to produce a ritual microcosmic model that will then contribute to the regeneration of the ordered macrocosm.

Even man contains elements that hail from the world of thought; one of them is the *fravashi*, his pre-existing soul, on which see below.

The “old gods”

There is one important difference between the two groups of beings in the world of thought. While the good gods (*yazatas*) belong to both the world

³¹ Commonly in the phrase “O Ahura Mazdâ, O most life-giving spirit, O you who establish living beings with bones (*dâtar gaêthanâm astwaitinâm*), O sustainer of Order!”

³² These are animals that were created by the Evil Spirit as counter-creations to Ahura Mazdâ’s good animals (see, e.g., *Bundahishn* 4.15, 5.3, and all of chap. 22). They include biting, stinging, and venomous animals, such as snakes, vipers, and scorpions, lizards, locusts, ants, flies, but also frogs, turtles, and owls.

³³ These are the expected forms of Pahlavi *mainyawa* and *gaêthiya*. The common transcriptions *mênôg* and *gêñg* are shown to be wrong by the fact that the words are always spelled without a final -k, *myndw* and *gytydy*, except in very late texts.

³⁴ See, e.g., Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 313–14, 354–55.

of thought *and* the world of living beings, the old (bad) gods (*daêwas*) belong only to the world of thought.

This restriction of the evil “pantheon” to the world of thought in due course raised the question of its “existence.” Thus, in the Pahlavi literature, theologians tended to deny the Evil Spirit existence, either only *future* existence, as in the *Bundahishn* (Indian *Bundahishn* 1.2–3), where it says that Ohrmazd is “he who was, is, and shall be,” while Ahrimen is said to be “he who was, is, but shall *not* be,”³⁵ or *any* claim to existence, as in the *Dênkard* (6.278), where it is said that “Ahrimen never existed and does not exist”³⁶ and (6.98) that “the gods (*yazd*) exist while the old gods (*dêw*) do not.”³⁷

In the West, however, the discussion about the *daêwas* revolves around the question of why a group of divine beings, who everywhere else in Indo-European cultures (Latin *deus*, Old Norse *tívar*, Old Indic *deva*) are benevolent gods, ended up on the “wrong” side of the dualistic divide in Iran.

In the *Old Avesta*, the *daêwas* stand in contrast to the *ahuras*, who are associated with Ahura Mazdâ, and it is commonly assumed that it was Zarathustra himself who, as part of his reform, caused the fall of the *daêwas*, as he is represented as doing in the *Young Avesta* (see below). Such an assumption is very convenient and eliminates the need for further explanations. As we shall see, however, both Zarathustra and his reform have dubious historical value, and it would be worthwhile investigating in comparative perspective how the “reversal” came about.³⁸

In the *Young Avesta*, we find Zarathustra “exorcising” the *daêwas* (from the world of the living?), who before then had been moving about on earth in the shape of men, by driving them underground and even besting the Evil Spirit himself with the help of the holy prayers.³⁹

In fact, the nature and origin of the Old Indic *devas* and *asuras* is also not quite clear until in post-Rigvedic times, where the two groups become

³⁵ See Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 278, 312 (par. 2).

³⁶ Shaked, *The Wisdom*, 109.

³⁷ Shaked, *The Wisdom*, 39, and “Some Notes on Ahreman, the Evil Spirit, and his Creation,” in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom G. Scholem on his Seventieth Birthday by Pupils, Colleagues and Friends*, ed. Efraim E. Urbach, Raphael J. Zwi Werblowsky, and Chaim Wirszubski (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), 1227–34; repr. in *From Zoroastrianism to Islam: Studies in Religious History and Intercultural Contacts* (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk: Variorum, 1995), article III. Hanns-Peter Schmidt, “The Non-Existence of Ahreman and the Mixture (*gumēzišn*) of Good and Evil,” in *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Second International Congress Proceedings* (Bombay: The K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1996).

³⁸ No doubt, if scholars had been presented with the Iranian scenario without having been told that it had been made by a single person, they might have focused more on the analysis of the texts and the myths they contain and come up with other hypotheses based on the internal evidence of the Indo-Iranian traditions, as well as comparative history of religions.

³⁹ See, e.g., Skjærvø, “Zarathustra: First Poet-Sacrificer,” 163–65.

increasingly hostile to one another, but with the *asuras* as the bad gods. The proto-Indo-Iranian scenario may therefore have been that of two groups of divine beings, each associated with certain high gods, that were in some kind of conflict. When one or the other high god gained ascendancy, the companion deities would naturally follow. Thus, in India, for instance, the prominent position of Indra in the pantheon may have guaranteed that of the *devas* at the expense of the *asuras*, while that of Ahura Mazdâ in Iran guaranteed that of the *ahuras* at the expense of the *daêwas*.⁴⁰

“Creation” and cosmic “birth” in the Young Avesta and the Pahlavi books
An apparently new feature in the Young Avestan creation myth is the involvement of the *fravashis*,⁴¹ the pre-souls of men, to whom *Yasht* 13 is dedicated. These are elements of the human constitution that are fashioned⁴² in the world of thought before men are born, but which come down when a being is conceived and participate in the development of the embryo and the fetus.⁴³ In these Young Avestan fragments of the creation myth, therefore, the ordering and engendering aspects come together.

This birth scenario of the creation myth is told explicitly in the *Bundahishn* (1.58–59):

Ohrmazd nurtured (*parward*) his “creation” (*dâm*) in the world of thought in such a way that it was in *moisture, unthinking, unseizable, unmoving, like semen. After the state of moisture there was a mixture like semen and blood...Still, in the world of living beings, they are formed in the womb of the mother and born and nurtured in that way. And by the establishment of the creation (*dâm-dahishnih*) Ohrmazd is father and mother of the creation. For when he nurtured the creation in the world of thought, that was being its mother. When he put (*bê...dâd*) it into the world of living beings, that was being its father.

In chapter 46 of the *Pahlavi Rivayat*, we find a description that reminds us strongly of the Old Indic creation myth told in a Rigvedic hymn, the fam-

⁴⁰ We may also note that some deities can be quite ambivalent; for instance, Old Indic Varuna, lord of the universe, who is called both *deva* and *asura*, has a frightening or dangerous side associated with the waters of the underworld. On the question of the Old Indic *asuras* and *devas*, see, for instance, Wash Edward Hale, *Āsura in Early Vedic Religion* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986).

⁴¹ Pahlavi *frawahr* and *frawash*, later also *farouhar*, etc. The fravashis are depicted as female warriors; for this reason alone it is unlikely that the Achaemenid figure in the winged disk represents a fravashi as thought by the Zoroastrians and some modern scholars.

⁴² The verb used for the fashioning of Zarathustra’s fravashi in the *Dēnkard* is *tâsh-* from Avestan *tash-*, on which see above.

⁴³ *Yasht* 13.11 “By their (the fravashis’) wealth and munificence I held out, O Zarathustra, the sons in the wombs, enclosed and not dying beforehand, (and,) until the destined delivery, I *assembled in the coverings *in right order the bones and the hairs, the *muscles and the intestines, the sinews and the limbs.”

ous *purusha-sūkta* (*Rigveda* 10.90). Here we see how the gods created the world from a primordial Man.⁴⁴ In the myth reported in the *Pahlavi Rivayat*, the creator (whose name is not mentioned) takes a piece of the Endless Lights, from which he makes all the creations, which he then puts into his own body, where they keep growing and whence he then fashions them.⁴⁵

The twin “spirits”

The most important feature of the birth myth is the myth of the twin spirits, Avestan *mainyu*. The primary source for this myth in the *Old Avesta* is a famous passage in which “the two spirits in the beginning” are said to “have been renowned as twin ‘sleeps’”:⁴⁶

Yasna 30.3

But those two spirits, in the beginning, who have been heard of as twin “sleeps,” (as) two thoughts and speeches, they are two actions, a good and a bad. And, between the two, those giving good gifts have discriminated correctly, not those giving bad gifts.

Most of the words here are grammatically dual and their surface meanings quite clear. The unexpected use of “sleep” in the dual, however, has caused Western scholars to seek other interpretations of the word. Grammatically it could also be an instrumental, meaning “through sleep,” which some scholars have then taken to mean “by means of a dream” or “in a

⁴⁴ As is well known, this myth is also found in ancient Scandinavia, where the giant Ymir gives rise to the world. It may be pointed out here that, although one frequently sees Ymir compared with Old Indic Yama, Avestan Yima, a solar figure, who in the Videvdad is represented as the first king of mankind, the surface similarity between the two names is deceptive. The initial *y-* of the Indo-Iranian forms is a consonant (as in *year*), while the initial *y-* of Ymir is a vowel (German *ü-*). When one reconstructs the underlying forms, one obtains something like **yomo-* versus **(w/y)myo-*, where it is not certain whether the initial consonant was *w-*, *y-*, or nothing. Note also that while Indo-Iranian *yama-* (meaning “twin”) also has a twin sister (Old Indic *yamī*, Pahlavi *jamag*), there is nothing twin-like about Ymir. Also, Yama/Yima is not dismembered to make the world. Bruce Lincoln’s reconstructions in *Priests, Warriors, and Cattle: A Study in the Ecology of Religions* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1981), chap. IV (especially 75–76), in the main repeating those of Hermann Güntert, *Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland: Bedeutungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur indo-iranischen Religionsgeschichte und Altertumskunde* (Halle, Saale: Niemeyer, 1923; on Yama/Yima and Ymir, 335–39), must be read very carefully for its various assumptions.

⁴⁵ Williams, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat*, 1:160–61, 2:72. Here, the Pahlavi word for “make” is the unmarked *kerd*, that for “fashion” the standard Pahlavi “creation” term *brêhên-*, apparently also an original carpentry term.

⁴⁶ On this strophe, see also Jean Kellens and Eric Pirart, “La strophe des jumeaux: stagnation, extravagance et autres méthodes d’approche,” *JA* 285 (1997): 31–72.

dream”⁴⁷ and then interpreted as “in a dream vision.”⁴⁸ The dreamer would have been Zarathustra himself, and the dream vision a revelation of the nature of the origin of the world.

There are several problems with such an interpretation. First of all, we would expect the verb “see” rather than “hear” if we are dealing with visions or, indeed, dreams. On the other hand, given the complex poetics of the *Old Avesta*, assuming that “sleep” is used metonymically for “sleeping thing” is quite unproblematic. In a cosmic birth scenario, this can than easily refer to embryos or fetuses, a notion also found in India.⁴⁹

Time as the father of Ahura Mazdâ and the Evil Spirit

Thus, already in the *Young Avesta*, we see a merging of creative functions of Ahura Mazdâ and the Life-giving Spirit. This state of affairs eventually led to the notion that it was Ahura Mazdâ himself who was the twin of the Evil Spirit, rather than the Life-giving Spirit. By the Sasanian period, this myth had developed into one in which Ohrmazd and Ahrimen (commonly also *Ganâg Mênôy*, “the Foul Spirit”) were in fact brothers, a very dangerous notion, which the Sasanian theologians strongly opposed, putting it down to one of the wiles of the cosmic Deception:

*Dk.9.30.*⁵⁰

And from the saying of Zardusht about the demon Arsh, how he howled to people:
Ohrmazd and Ahrimen were brothers from one womb!

Interestingly, the same heresy was fought by the Manichean theologians:

⁴⁷ Early Indo-European languages use the same word for “sleep” and “dream,” the latter being often expressed as “seeing sleep,” “in sleep” (Old Indic *svapna*, Greek *hupnos*, Latin *somnus*, etc.). Martin Schwartz, “Revelations, Theology, and Poetics in the Gathas,” *BAI* 14 (2000 [pub. 2003]): 2, points out the lack of the verb “see” in this passage and explains its absence as due to the fact that “*manyu-* ‘spirit’ is not an object of sight, since it is not a thing...but a causational force”; but it is the dream, not the spirit, that is seen.

⁴⁸ Traditionally in Western scholarship this has been thought to refer to Zarathustra’s revelation. Schwartz, in “Revelations,” 5 and 8, has taken this a step further, assigning the same meaning to the expression “seeing/grasping in one’s eye” (*Yasna* 45.8 and *Yasna* 31.8). (In my opinion *Yasna* 45.8 *chashmainî vî-âdarsem* may mean more precisely “I have seen in the corner of my eye,” with *vî-* expressing to the sides(?), and *Yasna* 31.8 *hêm chashmainî grabem* means “I have grasped (you) firmly in my eye”). Schwartz also interprets the verb *fradakhshaya-* (noun *fradakhshar-*) as “reveal” (8), traditionally interpreted as “teach,” although all the Iranian comparative material points to “throw, launch” (as with a sling).

⁴⁹ Note especially the description of the birth of the world at the beginning of the Old Indic book of Manu, where the primordial “thing” is said to be “asleep,” before the waters come over it and it is born: *Manu-smṛti* 1.5 “This (thing) was, risen from darkness, unknown, with no distinguishing marks, inconceivable, incomprehensible, like asleep (*prasuptam*) all over” (cf. Patrick Olivelle, *The Law Code of Manu: A New Translation Based on the Critical Edition by Patrick Olivelle* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], 13).

⁵⁰ See Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 429–30.

M 28 I Rii 1–4⁵¹

And they say that Ohrmezd and Ahrimen are brothers.
And on account of this speech they will come to destruction.

The warning was also incorporated in the confession ritual as an idea from which one should take exception and confess if entertained (Turkish *Xwâstwânîft* IC).⁵²

In due course, the idea that Ahura Mazdâ and the Evil Spirit were born from the same womb led to the question, “whose womb?” The obvious answer would seem to be that of the creator, that is of Ahura Mazdâ himself, as suggested by the frequent mention of Ahura Mazdâ as father and progenitor in the *Gâthâs* and compatible with what we read in the Pahlavi texts.

Another answer to this question is found in the writings of Classical Armenian and Islamic historians, who tell us it was the god Zurwân, that is, Time, who engendered the two. How old this speculation is we do not know, but it is not impossible that it goes far back. In the *Young Avesta*, Time is a cosmic entity characterized as “time without borders,” and “time long set in place by itself.”⁵³ The two kinds of time obviously refer to the eternal time in which Ahura Mazdâ existed before the creation and to the delimited time of Ahura Mazdâ’s creation, which had a beginning.

In Manichean texts in Middle Persian and Parthian, Zurwân is the name of the Father of Greatness, whose “son” is Ohrmazd, the First Man. Some scholars have concluded from this fact that the Sasanian kings were “Zurvanites.”⁵⁴ The existence of Zurvanism as a “sect” within Zoroastrianism, however, is only attested to by the Islamic authors (e.g., Muhammad al-Shahrastani’s [b. 1086] *Kitâb al-milal wa’l-nihal*, “The book of religious sects and philosophical schools”), and there is no evidence that it was endorsed by Sasanian royalty. In fact, the Sasanian inscriptions contain evidence of nothing but “standard” beliefs.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “The Manichean Polemical Hymns in M 28 I,” *BAI*, n.s., 9 (1995 [pub. 1997]): 244–45.

⁵² Jes P. Asmussen, *Xwâstwânîft: Studies in Manichaeism* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1965), 194.

⁵³ Two other “eternal” entities are “the lights without a beginning, set in place by themselves” (the Endless Lights), the “heavenly sphere, set in place by itself.”

⁵⁴ See Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 112–13.

⁵⁵ I do not understand Shaked’s statement (*Dualism*, 1) that “[t]here is very little by way of dualistic assertion in most of the extant Sasanian compositions. The theme does not come up in the monumental stone inscriptions of the early Sasanian kings or of the chief priest Kirdêr....” Shapur, Kerdîr, and Narseh, in their inscriptions, all stress the opposition between Ohrmazd and Ahrimen, truth and falsehood, good and evil behavior, paradise and hell. See also Shaked, *Dualism*, 15–22, for a discussion of the variants of the “Zurvanite” myth, and 119 on the likelihood of a Sasanian “Zurvanite body of doctrines.” See also Shaul Shaked, “The Myth of Zurvan: Cosmogony and Eschatology,” in *Messiah and Christos: Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity Presented to*

Shahrastani's work contains several "versions" of Iranian religion, which he labels as "sects." Two of these are of interest here.

In his description of the beliefs of the Kayûmarthiyya,⁵⁶ Shahrastani tells us that, according to this sect, Ahrimen originated from a thought by god (*yazdân*) wondering who his adversary would be. Here, as in the *Old Avesta*, the very act of thinking on the part of god brought what he thought into being.⁵⁷

According to the version of the myth told by Shahrastani and other authors about the Zurvâniyya, before the world existed there was Zurwân. He sacrificed for 1000 years to have a son who would create heaven and earth. Seeing his sacrifice had no effect, he doubted its value, and from his doubt Ohrmazd and Ahrimen were conceived. Then, seeing that he would bear two sons, he decided that the firstborn would be king. Ohrmazd knew what his father was thinking and told his brother, who tore open his progenitor's womb and emerged. Ahrimen, insisting upon his rights, was grudgingly accorded 9000 years of rule, after which Ohrmazd would rule. They both then began creating.⁵⁸

It is true that the cosmogonic myth assigned to the Kayûmarthiyya and the Zurvanites is not the same as that seen in the *Avesta* and the *Bundahishn*, but we recognize several elements, which shows it may be an ancient myth.

Origin of the myth of the twin spirits

Looking for the origin of the twin spirits myth, we should note, on the one hand, that the Evil Spirit is closely related to the myth of the obstruction of the rains, which plays such an important role in Rigvedic cosmogony. In India it is Indra who, when drunk on soma, smashes the obstructions that keep the heavenly waters from flowing forth. In Iran it is the Evil Spirit who holds back the waters. In a fragment of this myth in one of the Avestan hymns, we are told that, when the Evil Spirit was about to pass into Ahura Mazdâ's creation, Good Thought and the Fire held him back, preventing him from keeping the waters from flowing and the plants from growing (*Yasht* 13.77–78). It is quite clear that this is a myth about the

David Flusser on the Occasion of his Seventy-Fifth Birthday, ed. Ithamar Gruenwald, Shaul Shaked, and Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 219–40; repr. in *From Zoroastrianism to Islam: Studies in Religious History and Intercultural Contacts* (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk: Variorum, 1995), article V.

⁵⁶ Beliefs centered around the Iranian First Man, Pahlavi Gayômar, Persian Gayumarth, who is attacked and killed by Ahrimen during the initial attack; semen runs into the earth, and from it the first human couple is born (see, e.g., Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 367).

⁵⁷ Shahrastani, *Livre des religions et des sectes* (trans. with intro. and notes by Daniel Gimaret and Guy Monnot, 2 vols.; Paris: Peeters/UNESCO, 1986), 1:636.

⁵⁸ Shahrastani, *Livre des religions*, 1:638; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 419–29.

prevention and furthering of life and growth. In both the Indic and Iranian myth, the retention of the waters may therefore well refer to a birth scenario, where birth cannot take place until the waters have broken. The myth of the twin embryos fits neatly into a birth scenario as well. If we consider a natural birth process, we see that a *pair* is always born, namely the living child and the dead afterbirth or placenta,⁵⁹ which in modern Persian is in fact called the “twin.”⁶⁰

Polytheism or monotheism

Related to the question of Zoroastrian dualism, is that of monotheism or polytheism. The *Young Avesta*, in fact, abounds in gods of various kinds, while hardly any deity other than Ahura Mazdâ is mentioned by name in the *Old Avesta*. This fact was once and still is today interpreted as showing that Zarathustra banished these gods when he elevated Ahura Mazdâ to the one supreme god. Quite aside from the problem with assigning actions and thoughts to a doubtful historical Zarathustra (see below), the elliptic and cryptic style of the *Gâthâs* makes any such assertion difficult. We should also keep in mind that the *Gâthâs* are hymns to Ahura Mazdâ, and mention of the other deities, especially by name, is not necessarily expected.

Among the Young Avestan deities, two stand out. One is Mithra, who is closely associated with the rising sun, which he precedes at dawn while removing the powers of evil in its path. The other is the heavenly river.⁶¹ Both these gods (as well as others) were “set in place” by Ahura Mazdâ and made as worthy as himself of receiving sacrifices from humans. In the Pahlavi books, they are also explicitly part of Ohrmazd’s creation and are not included among the entities that existed with him from time immemorial.

Both the sun and its protectors and the heavenly waters feature prominently in the *Old Avesta*, however, and it is not unlikely that the Old Avestan poet, by his allusive techniques, is in fact referring to the deities as well. It should also be pointed out that, beside addressing Ahura Mazdâ in the

⁵⁹ Afterbirths are involved in several Old Indic myths, notably that of Aditi’s last child, Mârtânda, whose name means something like “the dead part of the egg.” Similarly, in Iran the first living being in the world of living beings was Gaya Martân, literally “the life with the dead thing,” a spherical being who was killed during the attack of Evil on Ahura Mazdâ’s creation.

⁶⁰ See Marten Stol, *Birth in Babylonia and the Bible: Its Mediterranean Setting* (Cuneiform Monographs 14; Groningen: Styx, 2000), 144–45, and James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (abridged ed.; New York: Touchstone, 1996), 45–47, about the treatment of the afterbirth in a large variety of societies, where it is commonly referred to as brother, sister, or double and saved for various purposes and various lengths of time.

⁶¹ Avestan Ardwi Sûrâ Anâhitâ, presumably: the Lofty, Life-giving, Unattached/Unblemished (Water), see Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Avestica IV: Anâhitâ – Unblemished or Unattached?”, in volume in honor of Firoze M. Kotwal, forthcoming.

singular, he often addresses him with an inclusive plural, which must imply “you, O Ahura Mazdâ, and those others with you.”

In this sense, then, one might call Zoroastrianism *polytheistic*, like the Old Indic religion, but, since it has a king of gods (like the Greek Zeus), it may more properly be termed *henotheistic*. Like Zeus, Ahura Mazdâ, too, seems to have been the ancient sky god, and his wife (and daughter), Avestan Spentâ Ârmaiti, “Life-giving Humility,” is precisely the Earth.

Western scholars tend to downplay this Zoroastrian polytheism by not translating the Avestan term *yazata*, which one normally would translate as “god.” Many also regard “Zarathustra’s” dualism as a reaction to monotheism, but this point of view is based on a number of untenable assumptions.⁶²

There are, however, some other gods in the *Gâthâs*, as well, whose interpretation has occasioned the “monotheists” some headache. First, there is Airyaman (Old Indic Aryaman), the god of harmonious unions and healing, who, it is true, is not mentioned in the corpus that is commonly referred to as the *Gâthâs*. He is, however, the principal character in what is today a separate prayer, the Â *Airyêmâ ishiyô*, “let speedy Airyaman come here!” (*Yasna* 54.1), which follows directly after the last *Gâthâ* (*Yasna* 53). This prayer is in the same meter as *Yasna* 53.⁶³ In *Yasna* 54.1, Airyaman is asked to come to help the “men and women of Zarathustra,” and the poet asks for his reward.⁶⁴ Faced with the problem of a god other than Ahura Mazdâ, scholars have either relegated this strophe to post-Gâthic, or “post-Zarathustra,” times or refused to acknowledge *Yasna* 53 as the prophet’s own words altogether.

Second, there are Sraosha and Ashi, who feature prominently in the *Young Avesta* and clearly behave as deities, as well as “abstract” concepts. Sraosha is the great martial deity of Zoroastrianism, the greatest fighter of the powers of darkness. His name means literally “readiness to listen,” that is, of men to god, and of god to men. The word *sraosha* occurs frequently in the *Gâthâs*, and it can be shown relatively conclusively that it also refers to Sraosha in his function as martial deity. Similarly, *Ashi*, which presumably means “reward” and who is a goddess in the *Young Avesta*, is apparent-

⁶² See, especially, Walter Bruno Henning, *Zoroaster: Politician or Witch-Doctor?* (Ratanbai Katrak Lectures; London: Oxford University Press, 1951), and Gherardo Gnoli, *Zoroaster in History* (Biennial Yarshater lecture series 2; New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2000).

⁶³ The numbering system is modern, but the prayer is separated from the preceding text also in the manuscripts.

⁶⁴ The situation is the same at the end of the *Videvdad*, where Ahura Mazdâ asks Airyaman to come and heal the ailing world, which is suffering from the 99,999 illnesses brought upon it by the Evil Spirit.

ly also used to refer to the goddess in the *Old Avesta*. Note especially *Yasna* 43.12, “Sraosha accompanied by Ashi, dispenser of wealth.”

Finally, there is an apparently novel feature of the Avestan pantheon, namely the relatively large number of what we would call “abstract concepts” elevated to the status of deities and which has also been ascribed to Zarathustra’s reform. Among them are Good Thought, Best Order, the Worthy Command, and Life-giving Humility. In the *Young Avesta* and the Pahlavi literature, these belong to a set group of deities, which, including Ahura Mazda, are called the Seven Life-giving Immortals (*amesha spenta*). It has been shown that these are originally hypostases of the primordial sacrifice performed by Ahura Mazda.⁶⁵ The Rigvedic pantheon also contains such deities, however, and it is likely that it is an Indo-Iranian phenomenon.⁶⁶ Moreover, some of them clearly correspond to “normal” deities; for instance, Life-giving Humility (Spentâ Ârmaiti) has long been known to be the Earth, and I have tried to show that Good Thought (Vohu Manah) in the same way corresponded to the sunlit cover of the sky. In these two we therefore recover the couple Heaven and Earth, which is frequently invoked in the Rigveda.

Dualism and human behavior

In a world that is nothing but the battleground for the fight between good and evil, how should humans behave? Put briefly, the fundamental action of any human being is the *choice*. A person must *choose* his sides and *declare* for one of the two rulers of the cosmos. And by this choice and declaration either ruler gains strength and the upper hand in the cosmic competition for supremacy.

The choice is closely related to the myth of the two spirits or, in this case, “inspirations.” The Gâthic poet, as we have just seen, describes them as the two thoughts, speeches, and actions: one good and one bad, and then goes on to tell us that it is whenever the two spirits/inspirations come together that one establishes for oneself⁶⁷ what is one’s “first”: life or non-life

⁶⁵ Marijan Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l’Iran ancien* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963), x: “la représentation des fonctions qu’elles incarnent dans la structure du sacrifice.”

⁶⁶ Notably, the Âdityas, see Joel Brereton, *The Rgvedic Âdityas* (American Oriental Series 63; New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1981).

⁶⁷ The verb form *dazdê* has been the object of much controversy. In Young Avestan it is simply the 3d singular present of *dâ-*, which in the middle means “establish for oneself” or “receive, obtain.” Bartholomae, however, analyzed it as a 3d dual perfect, the regular ending of which is *-âite* (not *-te*). Schwartz, “Revelations,” 5, substitutes an interpretation as 3d dual *present* (which, however, also has the normal ending *-âite*), “they establish, they determine,” commenting that the “present tense is used here in the dream’s perspective of events at the beginning, when their end was also determined” (a usage assumed *ad hoc*).

(*Yasna* 30.4), as well as what one's fate will be in the end. The sustainers of Order will obtain heaven, while those possessed by the cosmic Deception will have the worst existence. It is the choice between the two inspirations that determines how the new existence will be, and it was at the first choosing that the old gods chose the evil inspiration and were confused by the Deception so that they made the wrong choices. Thereby, instead of contributing to the rebirth of light and life, they contributed to Wrath (*aêshma*)⁶⁸ and caused Ahura Mazdâ's existence to get sick:

Yasna 30.6

Between these two, the *daêwas* did not discriminate at all correctly, because deception (*dbaoman*)

would come over them as they were asking one another, so they would choose the worst thought.

Thus, they would scramble together to Wrath, with which mortals (*martân*) sicken this existence.

The prototype of the human choices and behavior is Zarathustra, as exemplified by a Gâthic passage, in which the poet is asked—perhaps by God—who he is, on whose side he is, and what he has to show for himself. He answers the three questions by stating forcefully that he is the “true Zarathustra,” that he is the enemy of evil, and that he composes hymns of praise for the gods:⁶⁹

Yasna 43.7

Thus, I (now) think of *you* as life-giving, O Mazdâ Ahura,

whenever one/he surrounds me with good thought

and asks me “Who are you? Whose are you?”

How would you submit your daily earnings for questioning regarding your herds and persons?”

Yasna 43.8

Then, I declare myself to him first as Zarathustra,

the real one (*haithyô*); (second, that) I wish to command hostilities for the one possessed by the Lie,

but for the sustainer of Order I wish to be support and strength,

because I would like to receive the adornments of one who commands at will;

(and, third, that) to the extent I can I am praising you, O Mazdâ, and weaving (you) into hymns (*ufyâ*).

In the *Young Avesta*, Zarathustra is also said to have been the first to scorn the old gods, to choose to be someone who sacrifices to Ahura Mazdâ in

⁶⁸ The demonified darkness of the night sky.

⁶⁹ See the commentary on these strophes in Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “Praise and Blame in the Avesta: The Poet-Sacrificer and His Duties,” *JSAI* (Studies in Honour of Shaul Shaked I) 26 (2002): 32–35.

the tradition of Zarathustra, and to follow the guidance of Ahura Mazdâ.⁷⁰ The same statement is repeatedly uttered in all ritual texts and is part of the Zoroastrians' daily prayers and has become, as it were, their "profession of faith." In fact, one of the first great deeds of the Avestan Zarathustra was to drive the old gods underground and to deprive them of sacrifices.⁷¹

The person's choice is turned into practice through his thoughts, words, and deeds. A Zoroastrian's duty is to think good thoughts, speak good words, and perform good acts. Yet there is no obligation to be absolute or excessive in the performance of these duties. The primary goal is to do the best one can, while exercising moderation.⁷² Needless to say, however, one must strive to do more good than bad, for, according to all Zoroastrian texts, from the *Gâthâs* to the Pahlavi books, when a person dies, this person's soul (*urwan*) leaves the body and sets out on a journey into the world of thought. On this trip it is accompanied by the person's vision-soul (Avestan *daênâ*, Pahlavi *dên*), which helps it "see" in the world of thought, but also represents the totality of the person's thoughts, words, and deeds in life. Along the journey, these are weighed on a balance, and the way the balance dips will then decide what will happen to the soul when it next passes a bridge. This bridge will become wide or narrow as a razor blade according to the weight of his thoughts, words, and deeds, and the soul will accordingly continue on to the Best Existence or fall down into the Worst Existence.

Theological defense of the dualist position

In the first centuries of Islam, Zoroastrianism came in for sharp criticism by Muslim writers for its "two creator gods," but the theologians found easy arguments against the monotheistic position. Why was there evil in the world if god was an all-powerful good and compassionate god?

Going on the offensive, Mardânfarrokh son of Ohrmazddâd, who authored a lengthy book on how to dispel the doubts about the religions, among other things points out the impossibility that an omniscient, omnipo-

⁷⁰ Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Zarathustra: First Poet-Sacrificer," in *Paitimāna: Essays in Iranian, Indian, and Indo-European Studies in Honor of Hanns-Peter Schmidt*, ed. Siamak Adhami (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 2003), 161–62.

⁷¹ See, e.g., Skjærvø, "Zarathustra: First Poet-Sacrificer," 163–64.

⁷² This may be the reason why asceticism and monasticism never developed in this religion. On moderation (*paymān*), see, e.g., Shaul Shaked, "Paymān: An Iranian Idea in Contact with Greek Thought and Islam," in *Transition Periods in Iranian History: Actes du Symposium de Fribourg-en Brisgau (22–24 Mai 1985)* (Studia Iranica. Cahier 5. Louvain: Association pour l'Avancement des études iraniennes, 1987), 217–40; repr. in *From Zoroastrianism to Islam: Studies in Religious History and Intercultural Contacts* (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk: Variorum, 1995), article VIII.

tent, good, and merciful divine being should produce a being so contrary to his creator.⁷³ And if the being he created was not made this way, but became evil afterward, it would seem that the evil creature was more powerful than its creator. Similarly, against the Jews, why did the creator create Adam and Eve if he knew beforehand that they would turn away from his will and force him to punish them? If he did not know beforehand, then, surely, he must be ignorant and badly informed.⁷⁴ Against the Christians, as for the free will of men, since it was made for them by the creator himself, but was then used to commit sins, then god himself is logically the originator of those sins, since it was he who gave them the free will in the first place.⁷⁵ And so on.

Nevertheless, the Zoroastrian theologians still had to face the fact that, although the dualistic position exculpated god from having permitted sin and evil to come into being, it did not, of course, explain why he allowed it to enter his own perfect creation, nor why he let it persist without immediately doing something to get rid of it. The Zoroastrian theologians had answers to this, but hardly any that did not restrict god's omnipotence. Thus, in the *Bundahishn* (1.57) we find the statement that "Ohrmazd does *not* think something that he cannot do, while the Foul Spirit thinks what he *cannot* do and even insists on doing it."⁷⁶ Mardânfarrukh, however, points out that there are possible and impossible things, and Ohrmazd has no wish to do what is impossible and is wise enough not even to attempt to do it. In fact, the omnipotence of the creator Ohrmazd is omnipotence over what is possible, and he is limited in this way. This limitedness, however, applies to god's essential nature. Thus, it is not possible for a being that is all goodness to perform evil; but this is a limitedness that it would be ridiculous to regard as an impairment of the deity.⁷⁷

Epilogue

After the Muslim conquest of Persia and the exodus of many Zoroastrians to India and after having been exposed to both Muslim and Christian propaganda, some Zoroastrians, especially among the Parsis in India, went so far as to deny dualism and to view themselves as outright monotheists, and the dualist aspect of the religion is today sometimes downplayed or explained away. Yet this aspect is recognized and explained by several prominent Zoroastrian writers, and it remains one of the pillars of the religion, but this is not the place to discuss in detail modern Zoroastrian-

⁷³ Menasce, *Škand-gumānīk vičār*, 127.

⁷⁴ Menasce, *Škand-gumānīk vičār*, 189–91.

⁷⁵ Menasce, *Škand-gumānīk vičār*, 217.

⁷⁶ Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 317–18 (pars. 36–37).

⁷⁷ Menasce, *Škand-gumānīk vičār*, 39.

ism, its interaction with Indic and Western religions, the theosophical movements, and so on.⁷⁸

Appendix: The sources of Zoroastrianism⁷⁹

Zarathustra and ancient Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism is not infrequently invoked to explain novel or unexpected features in neighboring religions, among them Judaism (especially in its post-exilic form). Occasionally variant forms of Zoroastrianism are quoted, such as “orthodox,” “popular,” “Zurvanite,” as having influenced Judaism, or, what is even more problematic, individual interpretations of passages in the *Gâthâs* are cited as evidence for post-Achaemenid influence.⁸⁰ It is also quite common to hear or read statements such as “but we *know* that Zarathustra changed this.” Two questions need to be asked: Was there a Zarathustra who said or did things? And, if there was, how do we know that this is what he said and did? As I shall suggest briefly in the following, the question whether there was such a Zarathustra is never seriously asked and, by the standards of modern historiography, the answer is likely to be no. If, for the moment, we assume there was such a person, we shall see that the questions of what Zarathustra thought, said, and did have approximately as many answers as there are scholars who insist he was a real person.

Thus there are serious problems with the use of assumed Zoroastrian features in the context of the history of Near Eastern religions. A practical problem faced by most scholars of other fields who want to orient themselves in Zoroastrianism is the absence of a generally recognized and accepted reliable history and description of early Zoroastrianism. Most twen-

⁷⁸ See, e.g., Khojeste P. Mistree, *Zoroastrianism: An Ethnic Perspective* (Mumbai: Good Impressions, 1982), 29; John R. Hinnells, “Contemporary Zoroastrian Philosophy,” in *Companion Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy*, ed. Brian Carr and Indira Mahalingam (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 64–91; Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Shehnaz Neville Munshi, *Living Zoroastrianism: Urban Parsis Speak about their Religion* (Richmond, Surrey: Cruzon, 2001), 298–99 (summary of attitudes to dualism); Michael Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathustras* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002), 2:141–51 (India, late twentieth century), 354–60 (two modern intellectual Zoroastrians in America).

⁷⁹ The following reflections were added at the request of the editors in response to questions and comments that arose during the conference, notably the question whether certain possible influences on Judaism were from “orthodox” or other kind of Zoroastrianism. Needless to say, only some fundamental issues may be discussed, and only briefly.

⁸⁰ On some of these issues, see Shaked, “The Myth of Zurvan.”

tieth-century descriptions of Zoroastrianism disagree on important points of chronology, location, and doctrine.

The one point most of them agree on is that it is a *founded* religion, rather than a religion that developed organically from its proto-Indo-Iranian origins into the religion that underlies the Zoroastrian texts of the *Avesta*, the Achaemenid inscriptions, and the Pahlavi books. This point of view is based upon a Western interpretation of the sources going back to the seventeenth century to the effect that the Zoroastrian religion was a revealed religion in the sense of Mosaic Judaism and Buddhism, both of which feature an apparently historical figure to whom the religion was revealed by God. From the eighteenth century on, the texts have increasingly been interpreted as containing Christian-type ethics. The texts themselves, however, contain no historical data; nothing is presented in them as history; the Iranians, in fact, did not know “objective” history of the type seen in the Old Testament or developed in Greece. As a people whose only literature was oral, any events worth recording were incorporated in oral traditions, narratives, annals, and epics and subject to the inherent rules of these literary genres. A thousand years after Cyrus, Cyrus himself had been forgotten, and of Darius and his successors there only remained two unspecified rulers named Dârâ, one the son of the other, and one named Ardashîr. Alexander remained a beacon in the tradition as the destroyer of the *Avesta* and the murderer of the Magi and other good Zoroastrians. Thus, Zoroastrian “history” is divided into a mythical and legendary pre-Alexandrian era and a post-Alexandrian, mainly the Sasanian, period. Even this period, which is relatively close to the time of the authors of the Zoroastrian books, is described with little concern for historical “facts.”

Zarathustra and the Old Avesta

It was not until the late nineteenth century that Martin Haug first singled out the *Gâthâs* as the only texts attributable to Zarathustra himself,⁸¹ at a time when Avestan in general and Old Avestan in particular was very poorly understood. It was subsequently also assumed that they were the only part of the *Avesta* composed by him, and the only other Old Avestan text, the *Yasna Haptanghâiti*, the “Sacrifice in Seven Sections,”⁸² was thought to be a composition by some of his earliest followers. There were several reasons for this assumption. One was the fact that this text is clearly ritual, while Zarathustra was thought to have opposed ritual. Another

⁸¹ Martin Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis* (Bombay, 1862), 218–19.

⁸² This is the literal meaning of *haptanghâiti*, from *hapta* + *hâiti* “seven + section.” The *Gâthâs*, too, are divided into “sections,” which Western scholars have frequently, but misleadingly, also referred to as “*gâthâs*.” See, e.g., Kellens, *Essays on Zarathustra*, 80–83.

was the fact that this text is formally different from the *Gâthâs*, which are strictly metrical texts. The *Yasna Haptanghâiti* has no recognizable meter, although it employs poetic forms that are well known throughout Indo-European literature.⁸³ It has therefore been characterized as “art prose” (*Kunstprosa*), although it has never been explained what “prose” as opposed to “poetry” might be in the context of an ancient oral society, where the poets had obviously never seen a metrical pattern laid out on a written or typed page. The closest thing to “art prose” I can think of are the artful speeches of the Greek and Roman orators, but their prose is very different from that of the *Yasna Haptanghâiti*. Watkins comments on similar compositions that it “is clear that these verbal structures...are very different from ordinary prose in the same languages.”⁸⁴

It has now been shown, however, that its language is the same as that of the *Gâthâs*, and so no chronological difference between them can be established.⁸⁵ Mary Boyce has concluded from this fact that this text must then also contain the words of Zarathustra,⁸⁶ while other Iranists maintain the traditional view.⁸⁷

The final assumption has been that whatever is not in the *Gâthâs* (and now also in the *Yasna Haptanghâiti*) was omitted by Zarathustra on purpose. This includes, for instance, most of the Young Avestan pantheon.⁸⁸

It was Christian Bartholomae who first suggested that the *Gâthâs* (in the sense of *hâitis*) were sermons, in which Zarathustra preached his reformed religion. This view was generally accepted throughout the first half of the twentieth century and laid the basis for various attempts to arrange the *hâitis* chronologically and thereby reconstruct the evolution of the prophet’s thought. The fact that the poems used vocabulary and literary conventions found also in Old Indic as well as in other Indo-European literatures was interpreted as reflecting the prophet’s training as a priest, but it was assumed that this vocabulary and formulas differed from their Old Indic relatives in having been reinterpreted on a higher intellectual and ethical level.⁸⁹ Thus,

⁸³ See Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), chap. 22.

⁸⁴ Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon*, 229.

⁸⁵ This point of view is that applied to written texts, however. From the point of view of oral literature, the fact that the language is the same in all the Old Avestan texts means only that they were crystallized at the same time in the same linguistic form.

⁸⁶ Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, xiv.

⁸⁷ E.g., Gherardo Gnoli, “Le religioni dell’Iran antico e Zoroastro,” in *Storia delle religioni*, ed. Giovanni Filoramo (Roma and Bari: Laterza, 1994), 1:471.

⁸⁸ It must be pointed out that all these assumptions about the nature of the *Old Avesta* are made from the point of view of written literature. Once one starts thinking about it as oral literature, further problems pile up.

⁸⁹ See, especially, Herman Lommel, “Zarathustras Priesterlohn,” in *Studia Indologica: Festschrift für Willibald Kirfel*, ed. Otto Spies (Bonner Orientalistische Studien, n.s., 3, 1955), 189;

“good thought” was not simply good thought, but “ethically” good thought. The “ethical” standard was implicitly the Judeo-Christian one.

Questions of authorship and textual transmission

It should be pointed out that both the *Avesta* and the later texts leave the authorship of the poems undecided. In the *Young Avesta*, they are songs first performed by the deity Sraosha in the world of thought and by Zarathustra in the world of living beings. The *Old Avesta* seems to say that they were composed by Ahura Mazdâ and brought down to the world of the living by Zarathustra.⁹⁰ The Western notion of “authorship,” however, is firmly rooted in written literary traditions. As soon as we enter the world of ancient oral traditions, authorship loses much of its meaning, as each transmitter will put his imprint on the text he transmits.

The textual transmission history of ancient religious texts such as the *Avesta* and the *Vedas* must have included the following main stages in the case of the *Old Avesta*:⁹¹

- Composition and recomposition on the basis of ancient traditional poetic material and techniques; depending on the time one assigns to Zarathustra and/or the *Old Avesta*, this would have taken place about 2000 to 1000 years before the texts were committed to writing;
- The elevation of certain poems to sacred status, entailing the end of recomposition and changing of the text and the beginning of memorization and preservation, or crystallization, of an unchangeable text;
- The transmission of the in-principle unchangeable and unchanged text by priestly performers speaking later stages of the language (Young Avestan) or even different dialects of Old Iranian;
- In spite of the pretense of unchangeability, the Gâthic texts were “edited” in various ways, changing their phonetic and grammatical form;
- Certain Young Avestan texts were crystallized and the *Old Avesta* incorporated into this new corpus of unchangeable texts, the proto-*Avesta*, which became the holy texts of the Zoroastrians of eastern Iran (the area of southern Afghanistan and eastern modern Iran);

repr. in *Zarathustra*, ed. Schlerath and Bernfried (Wege der Forschung 169; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), 201–2. In Mary Boyce’s view, Zarathustra assimilated elements of “the ancient pagan cult...to his own ethical teachings” (*A History of Zoroastrianism*, 1:120). See also Henning and Boyce below on Zarathustra’s superiority of thought.

⁹⁰ See Skjærvø, “Zarathustra,” 171–73.

⁹¹ See Prods Oktor Skjærvø, “The Antiquity of Old Avestan,” in *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān: The International Journal of Ancient Iranian Studies* 3/2 (2003–2004): 15–41.

- The proto-*Avesta* was transferred to western Iran, perhaps under the Medes, and then transmitted by speakers of Median and Old Persian;
- The proto-*Avesta* was transmitted by speakers of post-Old Persian and early Middle Persian;
- The Avestan script was invented, and select(?) extant texts were incorporated into the written *Avesta* ca. sixth century C.E.;
- As a result of incipient writing, the oral tradition was weakened;
- After the Arab and Muslim conquest of Iran in the mid-seventh century, Zoroastrian manuscripts were decimated by willful destruction and other circumstances adverse to preservation;
- Ca. 1000, existence of a single manuscript of each part of the *Avesta*, from which all extant manuscripts are descended; and
- Thirteenth century, oldest extant manuscripts.

Despite the numerous dangers besetting the “original” text inherent in this scenario, scholars have assumed that Zarathustra’s followers transmitted the words of the prophet unchanged for over a thousand years, which means they can still be read by modern scholars (historians and historians of religion) as his *ipsissima verba* and therefore be used to obtain information about his life and teachings. Since, however, historical information is notoriously lacking in these texts, scholars have picked and chosen from the later, especially Pahlavi, tradition what they needed to fill in the reconstruction and have, in the process, given the prophet a mindset worthy of a modern religious personality steeped in the Judeo-Christian ethical tradition. This historical construct has finally been interpreted back into the *Gâthâs*, where, consequently, even stronger proof of his existence has been found.

Given that the details in the later tradition about Zarathustra and his birth, life, and death are clearly mythical,⁹² modern scholars have mostly refrained from reconstructing his life other than in general terms: growing up in the priestly class and educated as a priest, at some point he received a revelation from God, which changed his view of his countrymen’s religion. After periods spent in troubling doubt and uncertainty, he obtained a clear insight about the nature of the world and God and began preaching this to a small group of followers. A breakthrough came when a local ruler, Kavi Vishtâspa, was converted to the new religion and became Zarathustra’s patron and protector, even going to war to protect the religion. None of this reconstruction is backed by any historical evidence, and the probability that the Pahlavi legend retains historical events that took place one to two thou-

⁹² See, e.g., Molé, *La légende de Zoroastre*; Skjærvø, “Zarathustra,” 161–67.

sand years earlier is very small, especially in light of what we now know about history in oral traditions.⁹³

Zarathustra's date

There is a deep disagreement among scholars regarding the approximate date of Zarathustra, which today ranges from the middle of the second to the middle of the first millennium B.C.E. The principal argument for the earlier date has been a linguistic one, according to which the Old Avestan texts are composed in a language that, once the changes caused by the oral transmission are disregarded, is quite similar to and, in some respects, even more archaic than Old Indic. The counter-argument has been based upon the historical fact that related languages develop at varying pace (cases in point being the Romance and Germanic languages). Coupled with the observation that Old and Young Avestan appear to represent two different dialects of Old Iranian, not merely two different stages, it has been proposed that Old Avestan may in fact be later than Young Avestan. Both these arguments are weak and are only offered in order to be able to place Zarathustra in the sixth century B.C.E., in agreement with the "traditional" date found in ancient Greek and various other sources.

Walter Bruno Henning argued strongly for the reality of this date, that is, that it was actually a date in the life of an historical person who was Zarathustra (i.e., Zarathustra as reconstructed by Western scholars), though he himself recognized that this equation was rather shaky. With Henning's book we enter modern discussions of Zarathustra's date and homeland, his time and place, to be developed especially by Ilya Gershevitch, Gherardo Gnoli, and Helmut Humbach. Henning argued against those who did not accept the traditional date on the grounds that "the *Gâthâs* are old, old, ever so old" with sarcasm,⁹⁴ but his own argumentation was based on the assumption that the traditional date for Zarathustra, 258 years before Alexander (i.e., before 330 B.C.E., the date of the battle at Gaugamela), was correct.⁹⁵ He argued that the date established by the third century C.E. had

⁹³ See, for instance, Jan Vansina's conclusions based on field research in *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 192–93, that "recent oral tradition — one or two generations beyond the eldest living members in a community — suffers only small damage. But as traditions are older, the problems become bigger, to be at their peak when one deals with traditions of the origin."

⁹⁴ Henning, *Zoroaster*, 36: "as if 600 B.C. were not old enough for almost anything!...In the case of Zoroaster, we have to deal chiefly with two pleas: one is a linguistic argument of such extraordinary feebleness that one is amazed at finding it seriously discussed at all..."

⁹⁵ Henning, *Zoroaster*, 36: "I will say straightway that I count myself among those who accept the date and all that flows from it. There is nothing in the historical situation, in the cultural environment, in the religious development, in fact in anything, that can be said to conflict with it. As it

been preserved by the Zoroastrian tradition from the time of Zarathustra himself (which is quite possible if Zarathustra lived in the sixth century, but less so, perhaps, if he lived in the second millennium). His final argument was that “until that has been shown conclusively”—namely “that the date was found by calculation”—“we shall be wise to assume that it is a genuine date.”⁹⁶ From this he then concluded without further arguments that “[w]e are thus entitled to hold to the view that the year 588 B.C.E. is the true date of Zoroaster.”⁹⁷ To Henning, therefore, Zarathustra lived just prior to Cyrus’s overthrow of the Median state in 550 B.C.E. (a period for which we do have historical sources, none of which contain traces of the appearance of a prophet or a reform of the Iranian religion).

Extolling Zarathustra’s superiority of thought and throwing in an unfavorable comparison with ancient Near Eastern religiosity,⁹⁸ Henning concluded that

to appreciate Zoroaster, we should see him against the background of his time. If we do that, we cannot help paying tribute to him as an original thinker; for he was the first to put forward this protest, based on reasoning, against monotheism; and he was the first, in drawing the consequence from his dualism to give his lofty conception of the position of Man. This is a great achievement. It seems all the greater when we

can be shown to be in perfect agreement with the required conditions, we should accept it as a fact and suppress the natural urge to doubt all and everything, and in particular any kind of date.”

⁹⁶ Henning, *Zoroaster*, 40, continuing: “There is no difficulty in such an assumption. It is but natural that the members of the early Zoroastrian community should have counted the years from a significant moment in the life of their prophet, and that they should have gone on doing so until Alexander destroyed the Persian Empire and, with it, the power of the Magi; that with the confusion brought on by the Macedonian conquest the counting of years should have been interrupted, but, that, nevertheless, that one date, so-and-so many years before Alexander, should have been remembered for all time, although otherwise the memory of all that went before Alexander and of much that happened after Alexander was extinguished.” See the criticism of this argument in Jean Kellens, “Zoroastre dans l’histoire ou dans le mythe?: À propos du dernier livre de Gherardo Gnoli,” *JA* 289 (2001): 176–77. There is no evidence that the ancient Iranians counted years; Darius and Xerxes, for instance, nowhere mention the ages of their fathers and grandfathers. Note also that Henning *presupposes* the existence of the prophet with adherents who would remember.

⁹⁷ Henning, *Zoroaster*, 41.

⁹⁸ Henning, *Zoroaster*, 46: “How different Zoroaster’s Man is from the cringing primitive who runs to his witch-doctor to beg for protection against the dark threats of imaginary spirits; or from the trembling believer of the contemporaneous religions of the Near East, who approaches his god with fear and servility! He is a proud man, who faithfully serves the side he has, freely and deliberately, chosen, but who remains conscious of the value of his support and his own value.” Cf. Herman Lommel, *Religion und Kultur der alten Arier: Darstellungen und Untersuchungen*. Vol. II: *Der arische Kriegsgott* (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1939), 15–16: “Der allgemeine Gesichtspunkt, unter den sich diese Tatsache stellen läßt, ist der, daß die alten Arier ihren Göttern überhaupt nicht mit Furcht und Zittern, nicht unterwürfig und wie Sklaven niedergebeugt gegenübertraten, sondern froh und stolz wie freie Mannen einem mächtigeren Freund und wohlwollenden Beschützer...ich möchte glauben, daß dieses überhaupt indogermanischer Religiosität gemäß ist.”

consider that in material culture he was not far advanced: far less advanced than the peoples of the Near East, whom he nevertheless surpassed in thought.⁹⁹

We may note that, aside from a few etymologies, this was Henning's only contribution to the study of the *Old Avesta*.

In his most recent work, Gherardo Gnoli, recently turned staunch supporter of Henning's views, has argued against some of the arguments I had proposed myself a few years ago,¹⁰⁰ citing my statement that the traditional date is not necessarily a historically reliable date,¹⁰¹ and then remarking that "[t]his, of course, would make sense only if it had already been proved beyond any shadow of doubt, that Zoroaster was not a historical character."¹⁰² Thus, to Gnoli it is those who do not believe in Zarathustra's historicity that have to prove their point, not those who do.¹⁰³

Gnoli himself concluded that Zarathustra lived "between the end of the 7th and the middle of the 6th century B.C.E.," more precisely "618–541 B.C.E.," a date also proposed by Henning.¹⁰⁴ Thereby, Gnoli, in his own opinion, vindicated the date given by the classical authors, endorsed by Henning, but contested by several scholars, who have maintained it was invented by calculation. This date also placed Zarathustra firmly in the period of the *Achsenzeit*, to which Gnoli had already stressed his belief that Zarathustra belonged.¹⁰⁵

Religious and philosophical thought in the 6th century and, more generally, in the period of the Persian empire of the Achaemenians (6th–4th century B.C.E.), were marked by the progressive spreading of new tendencies with a highly ethical content, which gave the individual a centrality he had never had in the old religious systems: in Israel the persistence of prophetism and post-exilic Judaism; in Greece the pre-Socratics; in India, Buddha and Mahavira; in China Confucius and the Taoist school....

Placing Zoroaster just before or at the beginning of this process could mean restoring him to the "axial age" which in a way was evoked, in the context of this same prob-

⁹⁹ Henning, *Zoroaster*, 46–47.

¹⁰⁰ Gnoli, *Zoroaster*, 186–87.

¹⁰¹ Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "The State of Old-Avestan Scholarship," *JAOS* 117 (1997): 105: "These and other attempts at establishing Zarathustra's date on the basis of the traditional dates of the Zoroastrians and the Greek authors, can only lead to the establishment of the traditional date. The jump from this to the assumption that the traditional date was a real date of the life of a real person, is of course, imaginary."

¹⁰² Gnoli, *Zoroaster*, 186.

¹⁰³ Gnoli, *Zoroaster*, 186: "In point of fact, this is the method that should be followed: it is the historicity of Zoroaster, that is generally assumed to be obvious and natural both in antiquity and, apart from rare exception, in our studies too, that would have to be proved false, and not the contrary." I am, of course, not talking about the Zoroastrians themselves, who need prove nothing.

¹⁰⁴ Gnoli, *Zoroaster*, 165; Henning, *Zoroaster*, 41.

¹⁰⁵ We see here how a modern scholar's expectations about the mentality of a literary character over 2000 years his senior are used to argue for the character's historicity.

lem, by Louis Charles Casartelli, more than forty years before Karl Jaspers' *vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* appeared in 1949...Indeed the *Achsenzeit* would be seriously lacking without Zoroaster.¹⁰⁶

The argument that the followers of Zarathustra had preserved the date of the birth of their Prophet surely makes sense if he indeed lived within recent history. If, however, he lived in more remote times, the probability becomes exceedingly slim, and the date must be the result of other calculations. Gnoli does not address this second scenario, and the traditional date remains the traditional date only, whether true or not, but it does not by itself provide an argument for the historicity of the person whose date it is alleged to be.

The Zoroastrian reform

The reconstruction of the Zoroastrian reform is based on explicit statements in the *Gâthâs* and differences from Old Indic religion. There are no sources for the pre-Zoroastrian religion of the tribe to which Zarathustra belonged, and, in principle, the reform, if reform there was, could have taken place before Zarathustra. The position of most scholars who have discussed the issue has been, more or less, that the religion of the *Rigveda* is close to the Indo-Iranian religion, which means that the Iranian religion must be regarded as nearly descended from it. This leaves out of consideration the fact that the Indians and the Iranians had plenty of time to develop their religious thoughts independently; assuming that at least 500 years had passed since they separated, the total time of separation would be about one thousand years.

In the absence of historical evidence, throughout the twentieth century Zarathustra's reform also became the main supporting evidence for his historicity: on the one hand, since there was obviously a reform, Zarathustra must have been the reformer; on the other hand, since the historical Zarathustra was a reformer, there must have been a reform!

In the first half of the twentieth century, the main points of this reform were the following:¹⁰⁷

1. The demonization of the *daiwas* (Old Indic *deva*, Avestan *daêwa*), as opposed to the Avestan *ahuras*, benevolent and beneficent deities;
2. The ousting of the ancient (Indo-)Iranian deities from the pantheon;
3. The invention of a group of six (seven) "Life-giving Immortals";

¹⁰⁶ Gnoli, *Zoroaster*, 3–4. The notion of *Achsenzeit*, Axial Time, seems outdated, to say the least. A quick perusal of modern encyclopedias of religion revealed that it is not a standard entry any more.

¹⁰⁷ See, for instance, Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion de l'Iran ancien* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1962), 145–46. See also Stausberg, *Die Religion Zarathustras*, 1:87–91.

4. The abolition of the *haoma* sacrifice; and
5. The rejection of the bloody sacrifice.

As for the first point, we saw above that the problem of the “fall” of the *daêwas* is more complicated than usually acknowledged and that it cannot simply be ascribed to the reform of a single person, by which the event would be shifted from the history of religions to the psychology of a person living in an indefinable time and society in Central Asia in the second or early first millennium B.C.E. The Young Avestan myth of Zarathustra’s driving the *daêwas* underground can therefore also not simply then be the recasting in mythical form of an historical event.

As for the second point, based on the observation that gods other than Ahura Mazdâ (such as Mithra and Anâhitâ) are not mentioned in the *Gâthâs*, it must be kept in mind that the *Gâthâs* and the *Yasna Haptanghâiti* are hymns addressed to Ahura Mazdâ in praise of his creation, and one does not necessarily expect other great deities to be mentioned by name. Yet the question is more problematic. For instance, the name of Ardwî Sûrâ Anâhitâ, the deity of the heavenly waters, consists of three epithets, the gapped noun conceivably being the word for “water” itself. The deity may therefore well be intended also in the *Gâthâs* where water is mentioned. Mary Boyce, who has been one of the principal scholars involved in rehabilitating many of the elements that were earlier rejected as parts of the prophet’s teaching, has another take on this issue. In order to support her view that modern Zoroastrianism has faithfully preserved the doctrines of its founder, she has attributed several modern practices to him, including respect for several high deities who are still worshipped, among them Mithra.¹⁰⁸

As for the third point, the fact that the six (seven) are not found as a list in the *Old Avesta* (as opposed to the *Young Avesta*) is not crucial to the idea that they stem from that time, but, rather, the fact that at least one of them, Spentâ Ârmaiti, has an Indo-Iranian antecedent in Old Indic Aramati, both referring to the earth.¹⁰⁹ Old Indic too has other “abstract” deities, and it cannot be excluded that their proliferation in Zoroastrianism was the result of gradual evolution.

The fourth point was based on certain Gâthic passages that were interpreted, especially by Bartholomae, as containing condemnation of the *haoma*. This interpretation agreed with the theory that Zarathustra had banished all the ancient deities from the pantheon and rejected ritual practices that he, in his superior understanding, regarded as useless. The Gâthic passage once cited in support of this (*Yasna* 32.14) has now been shown not to mean

¹⁰⁸ E.g., Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 21.

¹⁰⁹ See Skjærvø, “Ahura Mazdâ and Ârmaiti.”

what Bartholomae and his followers thought it meant. Instead, the text taken to condemn the *haoma* sacrifice appears to condemn the wrong *use* of the *haoma*.¹¹⁰

The fifth point was argued in much the same way. Zarathustra's (assumed) compassion for animals and certain Gāthic passages were cited in support, but the passage thought to condemn the "eating" of "shares of meat" (*Yasna* 32.8) does not contain, as Bartholomae thought, the words "share" and "meat" and, most probably, not "eat."¹¹¹

A much more serious problem is that the above passages, like so many that have been used to reconstruct Zarathustra's life and teaching, are among the most difficult to understand in the entire *Old Avesta*. In this way, scholars have been able to interpret them more or less the way they wanted, especially by finding suitable etymologies for otherwise unknown words.

Based on their understanding of the *Old Avesta*, scholars have differed widely in what they have considered to be the contents of Zarathustra's reform. To Haug and Bartholomae, for instance, it was monotheism; to Henning it was a dualist's protest against monotheism; to Humbach it was a vision of the imminent beginning of the last period of the world, in which man was supposed to contribute to the removal of evil in order to re-establish paradise on earth; to Boyce, echoing Lommel, it "consisted largely in reinterpreting its beliefs at a nobler and subtler level, in the light of an intensely personal apprehension of the supreme God, and of the struggle to be waged between good and evil";¹¹² to Kellens it was in the ritual;¹¹³ to

¹¹⁰ See Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Smashing Urine: On *Yasna* 48.10," in *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context*, ed. Michael Stausberg (Numen Book Series: Studies in the History of Religions 102; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 262.

¹¹¹ My own approximate, working translation of the problematic lines is "namely Yima, son of Viwanghwah, became renowned (as guilty) of these sins. (You, O fire?), the bull (*gâush*), whose wish it is/was to please our men (with your generosity?), O distributor (*bagâ*), when *kindled (*khwâremnô*)..." This phrase may serve here as an example of the kind of problems encountered in the philological and exegetical interpretation of the *Old Avesta*. Here *gâush* is the common word for "cow, bull" (nominative singular); *bagâ* must be from *baga-* (vocative or instrumental singular), which, on the surface, at least, is the same as Old Indic *bhāga* "dispenser" and a deity and Old Persian *baga* "god"; and *khwâremnô* is the middle participle of a verb *khwāra-*, not otherwise attested. Bartholomae assumed that (1) *gâush* was for *gaosh* (genitive singular, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, 508); (2) *bagâ* was accusative plural of neuter *baga-* (the existence of which is quite doubtful, cf. masculine *baga-* "dispenser," Old Indic masculine *bhāga-*, and Old Avestan *bāga-* "share (of something)"); and (3) *khwâremnô* was causative of *khwāra-* "eat" (beside regular *khwāraya-*, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, 1865–66) and that the middle form had active (rather than, as expected, passive) meaning. In this way, he rendered the second half of this text as "he who, in order to satisfy humans, gave our (men) pieces of meat to eat" (*Die Gatha's des Awesta*, 29).

¹¹² Mary Boyce, "On Mithra's Part in Zoroastrianism," *BSOAS* 32 (1969): 34. Cf. also Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, 1:251: "It may well be that in thus offering hope of salvation to every morally good person who accepted his teachings, Zoroaster broke with old aristocratic and priestly tradition, whereby the humblest members of the community were probably consigned, with

Gnoli “the characteristic feature of Zarathustra’s teaching is therefore an anti-ritualistic emphasis.”¹¹⁴

The final point, which still plays an important role in the history of Zoroastrianism, Zarathustra’s reinterpretation of traditional concepts at a higher, ethical, level, can of course not be proved.

The historical Zarathustra, prophet, philosopher, and reformer

From late antiquity Zarathustra had been pictured as a prophet, philosopher, and reformer, and this picture of him was reaffirmed around 1700 when Zoroastrianism became a topic of modern scholarship.¹¹⁵ This image remained through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well, despite some doubts,¹¹⁶ and even throughout the twentieth century it has maintained a firm place in descriptions of Zoroastrianism. As new standards for historiography and the study of Avestan developed in the twentieth century and, especially, as the structures of the reform crumbled, it became necessary to provide more substantial arguments to replace this assumption. When called upon to do so, though, the only argument proponents of this view have offered is that the figure emerging from the *Gâthâs* is so lifelike that it must be that of a real person,¹¹⁷ ergo, the Western Zarathustra. This conclusion presupposes that Zarathustra in the *Gâthâs* presents himself as their author, which is not at all obvious. It is true that we occasionally find a Zarathustra speaking in the first person, but we also find the poet speaking in the first person and differentiating himself from Zarathustra in the third person, and, most of the time Zarathustra is not mentioned at all. Here, again, the approach to the poems is that of modern Western literary studies to *written* literature. In oral literature the ques-

women and slaves, to an after-life in the kingdom of shadows beneath the earth”; and she comments: “Such equity is likely in itself to have enraged the proud leaders of pagan society.”

¹¹³ In Kellens and Pirart, *Les textes vieil-avestiques*, 1:32–36.

¹¹⁴ Gnoli, “Le religioni,” 476.

¹¹⁵ For a survey, see, for example, Clarisse Herrenschmidt, “Once upon a Time, Zoroaster,” *History and Anthropology* 3 (1987): 209–37.

¹¹⁶ See, e.g., Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion de l’Iran ancien*, 384–94.

¹¹⁷ Examples in Jackson, *Zoroaster the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, 3–4 (“for Zoroaster is a historical character...the figure of the great reformer, nevertheless, stands out clearly enough to be recognized in its general outlines; and sufficient data can be collected to enable one to give a clear and correct idea of his personality and individuality”); Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, 1675 (“I regard it as certain that Zarathustra is an historical personality and that the *Gâthâs* are in the main his work...I am rather of the opinion that [in the *Gâthâs*] Zarathustra comes toward us in fully bodily and human form”); Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, I:188–89 (“Zoroaster, a man of faith, had his searchings after truth confirmed by a revelation...Casual detail provided by the sources (of proper names, personal relationships and isolated events) give this account fragmentary though it is, an impressive reality”; Gnoli, “Le religioni,” 1:474 (“Le *Gâthâ* presentano quindi Zoroastro come una figura pienamente e unicamente umana”).

tions of author(s) and what the extant “text” represents are much more complex; the argument that the Zarathustra figure (assuming he composed the *Gâthâs*) is so vivid and so lifelike that he must be real only takes us back to the author(s), and a case still needs to be made that the poet was Zarathustra and that this Zarathustra was as Western scholarship has made him out to be. Finally, once more, the passages cited in this connection are among the most difficult to understand in the entire *Old Avesta*.

Two Western scholarly myths

There are several other features of Zoroastrianism and ancient Iranian religion that are often stated as facts, but are in reality personal theories. I shall give two examples here: the *Männerbund* and the *fravashis* as spirits of dead warriors¹¹⁸ or as guardian spirits (or guardian angels!).

The Iranian *Männerbund*, bands of young warriors, is an invention by Stig Wikander, who, to some extent, postulated it on the basis of Henrik Samuel Nyberg's work.¹¹⁹ It is still cited as a fact,¹²⁰ but as far as Iran is concerned, it has been shown by Boyce to have no textual basis.¹²¹ In fact, it suffices to read Wikander's book to see that this is the case. Much of Wikander's argument was based on the idea that Avestan *mairya* referred to young warriors engaged in unbridled raids, etc., for which Old Indic *marya* provided some support. Avestan *mairya*, however, originally probably simply meant “young man” (more specifically, perhaps, “nubile young man”), as in Old Persian *marîka*.¹²² In the *Avesta*, however, it is a daêwic word meaning “rogue, miscreant,” or similar, and nowhere is it found in the plural or denoting a member of a group of warriors.

The *fravashi* is a constituent of human beings, which exists in the world of thought before a person is born. It comes down to the world of the living to help prepare the fetus and becomes a part of the body. When the person dies, it returns to the world of thought and subsequently comes down once a year (at New Year) to assist in producing the new *ahu*, the reborn world.

¹¹⁸ Such an interpretation of the fravashis was first proposed by Nathan Söderblom (“Les fravashis étude sur les traces dans le Mazdéisme d’une ancienne conception sur la survivance des morts,” *RHR* 39 [1899]: 229–60, 373–418) and modified by James H. Moulton and Harold W. Bailey; see Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, 1:117–20.

¹¹⁹ Henrik Samuel Nyberg, *Irans forntidiga religioner* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1937).

¹²⁰ For instance, in Lincoln, *Priests, Warriors, and Cattle*, 122–32.

¹²¹ Mary Boyce, “Priests, Cattle and Men,” *BSOAS* 50 (1987) 508–26 (review of Lincoln, *Priests, Warriors, and Cattle*); the concept is still in the 1988 reprint of her 1978 article “[Zoroastrianism:] Early Days,” in *Man's Religious Quest: A Reader*, ed. Whitfield Foy (London: The Open University, 1978); repr. as *The Religious Quest: A Reader* (London and New York: Routledge in association with the Open University Press, 1988), 610.

¹²² See Schmitt, *The Old Persian Inscriptions of Naqsh-e Rostam and Persepolis*, 43.

There are *fravashis* of gods (including Ahura Mazdâ), personalized natural phenomena, and of men and women. They are represented in texts and artistically as female warriors with raised banners. Nowhere in the Avestan or Pahlavi literature is there any indication that they watch over living persons, nor are they restricted to warriors.

It seems to me that the problem with the interpretation of the *fravashis* lies in the interpretation of the Frawardîgân festival, celebrated during the last days of the year. Since at least as far back as Söderblom, the assumption appears to have been that this is primarily a festival for the dead, hence the *fravashis* are primarily the souls of the dead. If, however, we assume it is primarily a festival for the *fravashis*, which belong to all living beings, dead, alive, and not yet born, then we see that the *fravashis* are celebrated in their primary functions as “birth assistants” and as protecting the new world about to be born against the forces of evil.

Using the Avesta as evidence for Zoroastrian beliefs in later times

While the *Avesta*, *Old* and *Young*, is our main source for pre-Achaemenid Zoroastrianism, it is not necessarily a reliable, and certainly not a complete, source for later times. The Young Avestan language cannot have been well understood in late Achaemenid times and Old Avestan probably not at all,¹²³ which means that any influence of Zoroastrianism on other religions must have taken place through actual observation of practices and information provided by Zoroastrians or people more or less familiar with the beliefs.

Interpretations of the *Old Avesta* or comprehensive theories constructed by Western scholars may or may not agree with the way it was understood in the Achaemenid and later periods and should not automatically be adduced as reliable evidence. One should be especially circumspect when confronted with statements such as: “such-and-such a feature in (e.g.) Judaism may be related to an obscure reference in the *Gâthâs*” or “such-and-such a feature is not found in the Zoroastrian sources, but may be from orthodox Zoroastrianism.”

This is even more true for reconstructions by modern Western scholars using modern philological and linguistic methods to find the literal meaning of the *Gâthâs*. Even if this is the true meaning, we have no guarantee that that is how the text was understood in later times.¹²⁴

¹²³ The two Avestan texts were presumably explained by the priests in whatever local language they themselves spoke. Recall that, at that time, there was still no written Avesta.

¹²⁴ See, e.g., Kellens, “Sur quelques grandes tendances des études avestiques et mazdéennes au XXe siècle,” in *Religious Themes and Texts of Pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia. Studies in Honour of Professor Gherardo Gnoli on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday on 6th December 2002*, ed. Carlo G. Cereti, Mauro Maggi, and Elio Provasi (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2003), 218–20.

Additional Bibliographic Resources on Zoroastrianism for Non-Specialists

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- “The Importance of Orality for the Study of Old Iranian Literature and Myth.” *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān. The International Journal of Ancient Iranian Studies* 5/1&2 (2005–6): 1–23.

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed a heated discussion about the correct approach to the Gāthās: through the indigenous tradition or through comparison with the R̥gveda. There was considerable skepticism against the latter, philological and linguistic method, which still has not completely died out (see Kellens, “Sur quelques grandes tendances”). Thus, Boyce (“[Zoroastrianism.] Early Days,” 604) criticized the philologists who “were happy with an interpretation which allowed them to ignore complex traditions and the living faith, and to wrestle with these great texts alone in the quiet of their studies” and instead proposed (613) that encounters with the living faith force “one to accept its adherents’ own understanding of [the religion’s] essentials.” Similarly, Gnoli criticized the comparative method, especially comparisons between the Gāthās and the R̥gveda for having “in some cases not of secondary importance in the end obscured the specific and innovative significance of Zarathustra’s thought and spiritual and human experience” (“Le religioni,” 470). But how can Zarathustra’s thought be known other than by studying the texts, unless it is presupposed? See also Kellens and Pirart, “La strophe des jumeaux,” 53–54: the meaning of a word can only be understood in the light of the “system of thought in which it participates,” and the philologist needs to take this last step of analysis, because, if he or she does not, then who will understand the text? (“qui, sinon lui, comprendra le texte?”).

- “The *Videvdad*: Its Ritual-Mythical Significance.” In *The Age of the Parthians*. Edited by Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Sarah Stewart. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006, 105–141 (The Idea of Iran 2).
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Eric M. Meyers

From Myth to Apocalyptic: Dualism in the Hebrew Bible

Introduction

The question of how much dualism there is in the Hebrew Bible, or even if there is any, is one of those perennial issues that has lingered in the discipline without any firm resolution. Moreover, the issue has long been associated with the concomitant problem of Zoroastrian influence on the Bible, which has perforce led many investigators to the post-exilic era when Persian influence was at its apogee and Zoroastrian religion began to flourish. It was the religion of ancient Persian Zoroastrianism that perceived history to be a struggle between the forces of good and evil, between the powers of light and darkness. This paper deals with three questions: First, is dualism present in the Hebrew Bible? Second, if it is present, which I believe it is, where did it come from? Third, why is it present in the biblical record and what function does it have there?

Previous work on this subject, while agreeing that dualism is present in the Hebrew Bible, was not uniform in its explanation of how it got there and when it became part of the theology of the Bible. The dominant view would seem to be that dualism penetrated Hebrew thought after the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.E. and after the Exile, and hence the subsequent turn to Persian thinking for the main lines of development. While not rejecting such an approach, I have come to believe that the manner in which dualistic ways of thinking came into ancient Israelite thinking is far more complex. To be sure, Iranian influences can be found and further research into the Persian setting of post-exilic Israel should be done, but other sources must also be pointed out, including the very nature of Hebrew thinking itself, which is so indebted to themes in ancient Near Eastern literature dating well before the sixth century B.C.E. Thus I have suggested that an “incipient dualism” and what at least one other participant in the conference called “complementary dualism,”¹ exists in biblical thinking at an early stage, probably in the First Temple period. Relying heavily on the work of Jon D. Levenson, I also posit that the mythic underpinnings of the

¹ Please consult Kyle McCarter’s article in this volume on this issue. McCarter’s definition of this sort of dualism may be described as a way of looking at the world in which there are two opposing, causal principles that are rooted in a cosmological system.

Hebrew Bible are not radically monotheistic and often depict God in struggle with opposing dark forces of chaos.²

As a result of dialogue with another presenter in our conference, P. Oktor Skjærvø,³ I now believe that the process of proving the dependency of biblical sources on Iranian sources is a very difficult matter and should be approached with great caution. That is not to say that Iranian dualism or Zoroastrianism does not contribute to the development of biblical thinking, but we may not be so sure of how it came to happen. The rise of apocalyptic and hence apocalyptic dualism⁴ in the post-exilic literature of the Hebrew Bible has surely been influenced by the experience of Exile in Persian-administered lands, but only when combined with earlier modes of Israelite thinking does it fully take shape. Similarly, selective borrowing from the Canaanite corpus of mythology has also influenced the development of Hebrew thinking, especially dualism and apocalyptic. The reemergence of myth in the post-exilic literature becomes a major vehicle for the Jewish community in dealing with the many uncertainties of life under imperial occupation and with limited hope for renewal of the Davidic kingdom.⁵ Clearly the trauma of the Exile greatly contributed to Israel's ability to deal with a wide range of theological issues, and the availability of mythic literary constructions including dualistic ones made this period a watershed in the evolution of post-exilic Jewish thinking. The onset of the Greek period too, with its new way of envisioning the human being as a physical body and an inanimate soul, contrary to the Hebrew view of the unitary view of the *nephesh* as one person or individual combining the physical body with the personality of that living or deceased individual, also may have contributed to the further evolution of late Second Temple forms of literature.

As one can well appreciate, recent efforts to understand dualism in the biblical setting have focused on the Qumran corpus and some intertestamental writings that are largely situated between 200 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.

² Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil; The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

³ Skjærvø's paper "Zoroastrian Dualism" and other references he offered caused many participants in the conference to reevaluate some of the common working assumptions that have operated in biblical studies for generations. Of special importance is the fact that many of the texts that deal with Zoroastrian dualism date well into the early medieval period, ninth-tenth centuries C.E. So the process of proving dependency of the biblical text on Iranian sources of dualism is very complicated, and I will return to it below.

⁴ This is what others in the conference, notably Kyle McCarter, called "eschatological dualism," whose date is ca. 500 B.C.E.

⁵ The tensions created by the inability to realistically recreate the Davidic kingdom are especially evident in Second Zechariah (cc 9–14) with its numerous references to the house of David and messianic hopes that attended it. See Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers Anchor Bible Commentary on this material, *Zechariah 9–14: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25C; New York: Doubleday, 1993).

This is quite understandable in view of the fact that the Dead Sea covenants comprised an apocalyptic community that believed that they were living in the end of time and facing an imminent end-time struggle between the forces of good and evil. Moreover, they were a small sectarian group within a much larger and diverse Jewish community. Insofar as both the Qumran community and other groups of Palestinian Jews in the late Second Temple period embraced restorative and largely messianic ideologies to express themselves (i.e., some aspects of an ideal kingdom in which king and priests played special roles), the development of a kind of philosophical dualism in Philo and others pointed in an entirely new direction. As heir to the binary view of human existence of which there is only a trace in the Hebrew Bible, such a trajectory lies beyond the scope of this paper.⁶

Dualism is not an easy category of thought to define, and most scholars have subscribed to a very general definition something like this: dualism is a mode of thinking that separates reality into two opposing forces. Since most scholars usually associate such a phenomenon with apocalyptic, it follows that the beginnings of dualism in ancient Israel have been traditionally assigned to the post-exilic Persian era when Israel's misfortunes were thought by many to have been the result of a cosmic conflict between Yahweh and the personified forces of evil exemplified by the neo-Babylonians. Most apocalyptic writings that emerged in this context either consist of some sort of cosmological speculation or include a review of significant historical events by epochs.⁷ In dealing with reality in such ways, apocalypses were able to interpret the present in light of the past and in anticipation of the future. The information that apocalyptic brings to the fore is presumably new and derived through divine revelation, and hence by definition is not readily available to everyone. Pseudonymity became often associated with such revelations also. One of the most common features of the apocalyptic genre, therefore, is dualism, along with a developed angelology, an anticipation of cosmic catastrophe, and a subsequent period of glory in the Kingdom of God after the final encounter between the forces of good and evil. The final epoch or era is often referred to as a period of great

⁶I am very grateful to Michael Rosenthal for pointing out this aspect of Philonic thought to me and for his useful comments on the original version of this paper. His insights have led me to new places in my thinking about any number of things, but especially as the topic of dualism applies to this in the modern era in a Jewish context.

⁷Paul Hanson's *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) made this hypothesis one of the major building blocks of biblical scholarship in the end of the twentieth century. Hanson's narrow understanding of the phenomenon, however, is reflected in his thesis of internal division in Judah between hierocrats and visionaries, which he allows to be determinative of many other aspects of post-exilic thought and ultimately leading to the division at Qumran. Nonetheless, his book remains one of the most valuable tools for assessing the major transformations of early Second Temple literature.

tribulation, often associated with the “birthpangs of the Messiah” (*heblē mašīah*).⁸ Hence, the term employed in this paper for post-exilic dualistic thinking is “apocalyptic dualism.”

Apocalyptic may also be associated with prophetic eschatology, whose message is mediated through revelation to the prophet; often, as in Ezekiel and Zechariah, they contain messages or revelations that are communicated in visions, frequently focused on familiar items drawn from Israel’s rich literary heritage and symbolic universe: the Temple (Ezek 40–47), the menorah (Zech 4), the flying rolled scroll (Zech 5:1–4), etc. But from the sixth century onwards, apocalyptic thought also draws upon Canaanite mythology and the mythologies of other neighboring cultures.⁹ Indeed the crisis of faith that came about as a result of the destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.E. and the trauma of the Exile for large segments of the Judean population forced Jews to interpret their plight in many different ways, and apocalyptic and prophetic eschatology, along with wisdom writings such as the Book of Job, became some of the new literary vehicles for understanding that plight. The rise of apocalyptic, which may be associated with dualism, thus may be understood as a response to human tragedy epitomized by the destruction and exile, leading groups within ancient Israel to confront the new and changed realities of the end of the First Temple period by employing internal elements of their own literary traditions and through the re-use of older mythic traditions borrowed mostly from Canaanite culture.

This transformation of ancient Israelite traditions occurred mostly in the Persian period or the end of the First Temple period (i.e., the end of the Iron Age), but it continued well into the Hellenistic era. The earlier period may be illustrated by texts in Isaiah 24–27, Third Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah; the prophets of Israel insisted that God alone was the source of good and evil (see below). The Enoch literature and the Book of Daniel represent the latter period. The later corpus of apocalyptic literature reveals an alternative biblical view of how the God of Israel became increasingly threatened by the opponents of Israel and their deities. In this literature angels, demons, and forces that have the power to challenge God’s order of creation—as created by the God of Israel—more and more inhabit the world. When the world order became truly threatened by evil cosmic forces, as is the case in the War Scroll at Qumran, for example, then the world was construed as

⁸ The notion of the birthpangs is a later, postbiblical idea that signifies the messianic woes or great suffering that would precede the end-time consummation of history. Its origin is usually associated with the Bar Kochba period or second century C.E.

⁹ Hanson, *The Dawn of the Apocalyptic*, depends heavily on the work of Frank M. Cross, especially *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), in developing these ideas. Hanson was drawn to the problem through his interest in apocalyptic eschatology; I have come back to this through my interest in dualism.

sort of tottering on the edge of an abyss, in imminent danger of a cataclysmic event at which time the forces of good, of God, would win out and inaugurate a new era. Those who would claim to have direct knowledge of such an eschatological event would be saved in the end, going on to eternal life in the new and final epoch.

The broad outlines of the emergence of apocalyptic with its dualistic core, thus, are well known to students of the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism.¹⁰ That it should culminate in the literature of Qumran should be no surprise either, given that many of the sectarians' idiosyncratic ideas had been known for many years prior to the discoveries at Qumran through classical sources and the *Damascus Document*. Given the broad outlines I have enumerated above, however, I should like to consider the possibility that some aspects of dualism reside more deeply in the mythic underpinnings of the Hebrew Bible, and in a slightly earlier time frame, though to be sure they are not as full-blown as what we see in the later periods.

Myth and Dualism

For the germ of this idea I am grateful to Jon D. Levenson and his book, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*. I had not read this book before preparing this paper and found it in a library search under "dualism." While we may understand the content of the work under such diverse rubrics as theodicy or the theology of divine omnipotence in the Hebrew Bible, what Levenson does is to describe how the God of Israel struggles with evil in order to maintain God's control over the created order, and in Levenson's view it is a true struggle, a hard-fought battle with an uncertain outcome. Levenson traces these notions back to Israel's beginnings in the First Temple period and finds such ideas most clearly elucidated in the priestly account of creation, Genesis 1.¹¹

Levenson does not accept the very commonly held idea that the biblical view of creation is based on the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*, which if it were true, he avers, would trivialize creation "by denying the creator a worthy opponent." For Levenson the "nothing" of the myth of creation is really equal to disorder, chaos, injustice, disease, and death—that is to say, something very significant. Levenson's central claim is the "affirmation that God is the creator of the world" who directs his energies against forces that oppose God, namely chaos. The midrash on Gen 1:1–2 also presupposes

¹⁰ See most recently John Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998).

¹¹ Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 53–130.

that God did not create the world for good “out of nothing, but out of a malignant substratum.” The well-known book by Bernard Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos*, in which he expresses the common view of God’s total power over negative or opposing forces, presupposes a more commonly accepted view of creation. Anderson puts it this way:

Israel’s faith stressed the sovereignty of [YHWH’s] will to such an uncompromising extent that it refused to allow the control to slip into the hand of some vital power, whether a good demon or an evil demon. Men believed that [YHWH] was the sole source of good and evil, of light and darkness, of life and death.¹²

Levenson does not agree and says on the contrary, if “rival power(s) never acquire control, never pose a serious challenge to YHWH’s sovereign will, then why the ecstatic jubilation at the thought of vanquishing them?”¹³ In many ways Psalm 44 provides the answer to such a conundrum for Levenson. Israel’s suffering at the hands of its enemies is so enormous, so great, that the psalmist asks if God has hidden his face (verse 25) or gone asleep (verse 24). In desperation the psalmist calls out for help: “Arise and help us, redeem us [YHWH], as befits Your faithfulness” (verse 27). Levenson’s conclusion regarding this psalm is that somehow the order of the world and control of history has slipped out of God’s control into potent and malevolent forces; the jubilation that ensues with God’s victory, for example, in Ps 97:1, where verse 1 has the pronouncement “YHWH *mālāk*” (“YHWH has become king”), reflects the tension between order and chaos. Though the good ending is the result of God’s faithfulness, the possibility of a cessation of it is nonetheless real rather than imagined.¹⁴

At the core of Levenson’s argument is a rejection of what recent theologians like H. Richard Niebuhr have called the “radical monotheism” of the Hebrew Bible: “It is the confidence that whatever is, is good, because it exists as one thing among many which all have their origin and their being in the One....”¹⁵ This is the source of the common belief that God is the sole source of good and evil, light and darkness, over which God has complete control. By assigning everything to God, as it were, we might conclude that even evil is good, and biblical monotheism does not do that. Rather, biblical monotheism does not assume that everything is good; darkness is not good (for example, as in Isa 60:14–20, especially verse 19: “No

¹² Bernhard W. Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 151, as quoted by Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, xxi. The book was first published in 1967.

¹³ Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, xxi–xxii.

¹⁴ Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, xxii–xxiii.

¹⁵ As quoted in Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, xxiii.

longer shall you need the sun for light by day, nor the shining of the moon for radiance (by night); for the Lord shall be your light everlasting, your God shall be your glory...” and is intended to disappear in the end time according to Third Isaiah. God creates both light and darkness, weal and woe (Isa 45:7) and has mastery over them, but “darkness” and “woe” need not endure forever but remain under God’s control when God exerts his sovereignty or Divine Will.

In sum, Levenson makes an eloquent case for taking the biblical language of divine combat, victory, and enthronement seriously by understanding the priestly account of creation in a realistic way, not as *creatio ex nihilo* but creation against something in which boundaries are taken seriously. In eschatological texts where God is tested against serious opposing forces, his victories are celebrated accordingly, especially in the enthronement psalms. The comparison to *Enuma Eliš*, the Mesopotamian creation myth recited on the Babylonian New Year’s festival, is obvious and the New Year’s festival celebrates Marduk’s mastery over his foes. That YHWH does not have complete mastery over foes at all times is evident in Ps 82:1 and 74:1–9, 12–17. God’s ultimate mastery over such forces, described in Genesis and in Psalms in mythic language, comes out most clearly in Ps 74:12–17, the basis of which is the Canaanite myth in which Baal defeats the ocean, or biblical Leviathan:

- 12 O God, my King from of old,
who brings deliverance throughout the land;
- 13 it was You who drove back the sea with Your might,
who smashed the heads of the monsters in the waters;
- 14 it was You who crushed the heads of Leviathan,
who left him food for the denizens of the desert;
- 15 it was You who released springs and torrents,
who made mighty rivers run dry;
- 16 the day is Yours, the night also;
it was You who set in place the orb of the sun;
- 17 You fixed all the boundaries of the earth;
summer and winter—You made them.

The drama of victory preserved in the biblical texts echoes the excitement of Canaanite myth. While no one could equate the sort of tension we find in later dualism with Genesis, for example, the several examples from Psalms come pretty close. I propose that we consider these mythic vestiges in which God finds worthy foes, at least those which predate full-blown apocalyptic, “incipient biblical dualism.” Therefore the suggestions of

some scholars that we do not find any sort of dualism in the Bible in pre-exilic era are to be rejected.

Many other texts might be cited in defense of such a view, and Levenson and others have collected them under varying rubrics. The point that Levenson has made so well, however, is worth emphasizing again: the use of mythic passages in the Hebrew Bible to present Yahweh with a worthy opponent, such as the defeat of Rahab in Ps 89:6–9 or of Leviathan in Psalm 74, in other words the defeat by the God of order of the chaos monster, lends a sense of drama and realism to the biblical creation stories. The underlying literary theme that makes this possible is cosmic dualism that has been borrowed from neighboring Canaanite culture.

Iranian Influence?

In any consideration of dualism in ancient Israel, one must address the perennial issue of whether there is any certain trace of Iranian influence, either linguistic or textual, on the Hebrew Bible. It is a commonplace assumption in biblical studies that during the period of Persian domination of Near Eastern politics, from Cyrus the Great to Alexander the Great (ca. 538–333 B.C.E.), more than two centuries, that Persian influence on local Semitic cultures was mediated. That the Persians established themselves in complete control for this period is indisputable. That they reorganized the neo-Babylonian empire along new lines and with new emphases is also not in doubt. In Israel (called ancient Yehud in this era) Zerubbabel was installed as *pehâ* or governor at the beginning of the era, and no king was allowed.¹⁶ And the Persians were astute enough to allow local customs and religious traditions to continue in all their satrapies. One could well understand why so many scholars are inclined to perceive in the post-exilic situation the appropriate atmosphere for much cross-cultural fertilization.

But the Persians, at least in their far-flung conquered territories such as Yehud, were equally astute in keeping a safe distance from the indigenous people, and hence there was not as much opportunity for linguistic or cultural borrowing as one might think. The Iranian kings allowed their foreign affairs in the satrapies to be conducted in “imperial” Aramaic, and they had no disposition to Iranacize the empire outside the homeland. Though Zerubbabel was raised in Persia, possibly in a very elite circle close to the royal court, he, like Nehemiah more than seventy years later, reveals virtually nothing about the Persian court nor displays any knowledge of Per-

¹⁶ See Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9–14*, 15–22; and Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8; A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25B; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 9–13 and *ad. loc.*

sian religion.¹⁷ In fact, most biblical sources reveal virtually no information about Persian religion at all. The Persian authorities in the provinces and at home were viewed with a measure of respect by the Judean leadership from the beginning of the Persian era when Cyrus's edict of return was not only welcomed but also viewed with messianic, eschatological import (Isa 44:28 and 45:1).¹⁸ Because of the scholarly disposition to invoke Persian influence in explaining the emergence of apocalyptic themes and eschatology, one must ask further why Israel would have turned to Iranian religion in the first place, and if so, by what means such views were mediated to Israel. These are extremely difficult issues to assess, and if one were to respond affirmatively one might expect to find a range of lexical hints embedded in the Hebrew text in addition to conceptions arising out of later Iranian religious ideas (e.g., the angels of the Enoch literature may be related to the Iranian "guardian spirits"). A major factor in our consideration of Iranian influence in the Persian period is that the Greeks in their writings (especially Herodotus) presented Iranian ideas and beliefs for their own European readership. It is therefore quite possible that the Jews got much of their knowledge about Persian religions from the Greeks themselves in the Hellenistic period.

The main Persian source that may have influenced Israelite biblical texts is the *Avesta*, written down ca. 500 C.E. but orally transmitted from earlier materials, with some older sections going back much earlier (so Skjærvø).¹⁹ The fact that so much of the content of Iranian religion is difficult to date raises a sense of heightened caution with respect to much of the scholarly literature on this subject. Recent writings on this subject have been few and far between in biblical studies, a good summary of which appears in James Barr's 1985 *JAAR* article.²⁰ Notwithstanding Skjærvø's important reservations in his programmatic article of 1999,²¹ he offers a methodological way out of more than a century of scholarship on the topic. What he does is

¹⁷ Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 13-14.

¹⁸ See Kenneth Hoglund, "Cyrus," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David N. Freedman (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 305-6.

¹⁹ In his conference paper Skjærvø noted that some portions of the *Avesta* may go back to the second half of the second millennium B.C.E. on the basis of linguistic considerations and the later parts to the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. He noted also that the corpus of inscriptional material from the Achaemenid kings from the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. also comprise an important data base with which to compare materials. That is to say if material in the inscriptional data conforms or overlaps with non-Iranian material then a case may be made for borrowing and early dating. See Skjærvø's other articles referred to in n. 22 below.

²⁰ James Barr, "The Questions of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity," *JAAR* 53 (1985): 201-36.

²¹ Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Avestan Quotations in Old Persian? Literary Sources of the Old Persian Inscriptions," *Irano-Judaica* 4 (1999): 1-64; see also his paper, "Iranian Elements in Manicheism; A Comparative Contrastive," *Res Orientales* 7 n.d.

point to the parallels between old portions of the *Avesta* and both ancient Near Eastern inscriptions and the inscriptions of the Persian kings from the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. When there is overlap and correspondence, I would conclude that it is acceptable to use the Iranian material for reconstruction of ideas in the Persian empire and in particular in the Persian province of Yehud. The corpus of material is vast, however, and since I have learned about this material only after reading Skjærvø as a result of our conference, I am only beginning to work out this methodology. By pointing to it as an important tool for biblical studies, however, I hope that scholars will find it useful even at this early stage.²²

In any case, the Mazdean doctrine that has attracted a great deal of attention with respect to Zoroastrian influence on the Hebrew Bible is the one that deals with fire (Atar). Fire is given the highest honor in Zoroastrian tradition and is called the “son of Ahura Mazdâ” (Y. 36.2), and the house-lord prays that the sacred fire will burn continually in his house (Y. 62.3). Therefore preparation of sacred fire involving purification and consecration was an essential element in Persian religious rites. Some post-exilic Jews may have been attracted to this, and Isa 50:10–11 may be a condemnation of this rite:

10 Who among you reveres the Lord and heeds the voice of His servant?
Though he walk in darkness
And have no light,
Let him trust in the name of the Lord
And rely upon his God.

11 But you are all kindlers of fire,
Lighters of fires,
Walk by the blaze of your fire,
By the brands that you have lit!
This has come to you from My hand:
You shall lie down in pain

Isa 66:17 may also be a condemnation of this ceremony.

Arguing that Trito-Isaiah is familiar with a particular Zoroastrian rite is a far cry from saying that Zoroastrian dualistic ideas have influenced Jewish apocalyptic, though Morton Smith argued in 1963 that all sorts of Persian ideas, including cosmological ideas, had even influenced Deutero-Isaiah.²³ In this regard we are inclined to agree with Paul Hanson, whose book on apocalyptic we have already mentioned, when he wrote in regard to apoca-

²² There is also the linguistic aspect of such study, which is really beyond my competence. However, much has been done in this area as well. See Skjærvø, “Iranian Elements in Manicheism,” and bibliography cited there.

²³ Morton Smith, “II Isaiah and the Persians,” *JAOS* 83 (1963): 415–21.

lyptic eschatology that it was not necessary to turn to Iranian sources to understand such a phenomenon; the reuse of Canaanite myth, which was an inner-Jewish development, was all that was necessary to understand the rise of apocalyptic in the Persian period.²⁴

Smith's article, nonetheless, is groundbreaking in a number of ways. In a suggestion that has largely gone ignored, even by myself in my own work on the Persian era, Smith suggests that Persian agents who made known to Isaiah Cyrus's Proclamation even before it was made public provides the clue for arguing a much greater influence on Deutero-Isaiah. The case for dependency is very strong, and Deutero-Isaiah seems to have adapted his theodicy to the version of the Cyrus Proclamation that features Marduk-Nabonidus. In Isaiah's version, YHWH was angry with his people Israel because of their past covenant misdeeds and therefore gave them over to the neo-Babylonians as punishment. The neo-Babylonians, however, went too far, and YHWH became angry with them and hence appointed a just ruler to set the Israelites free and punish them. This narrative is put forth in Deutero-Isaiah (47:5ff., 40:1ff., 42:6, 45:1ff., 42:1, 48:14, 43:14, 44:28a, 41:2, 45:2, 47:3–10) following the order laid forth in the Proclamation. The similarities between the two versions are stunning, and Isaiah 40 and 45 bear a striking resemblance to *Yasna* 44 in respect to the cosmological issues raised. In the words of David Winston: "It is certainly striking that both groups of questions note the creative powers of the Godhead in fathering justice and right thought, mapping out the heavens and all their hosts, establishing the earth, regulating the waters and plant life, and forming light and darkness."²⁵

Smith suggests therefore that Deutero-Isaiah's focus and emphasis on cosmology in Isaiah 40–48 would not have been so clearly presented and so obviously exaggerated had Zoroastrian ideas not penetrated the Mesopotamian world by the time of Cyrus the Great. *Yasna* 44, mentioned above, one of Zoroaster's Gathas addressed to Ahura Mazdâ in the form of a series of rhetorical questions, has influenced Isaiah also at the level of stylistic or literary considerations. In Deutero-Isaiah Ahura Mazdâ's answers become YHWH's response to cosmological queries. Smith's case for some sort of literary dependency is very strong indeed and, as indicated above, is supported by Winston in his important article a few years later.²⁶

²⁴ Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 60.

²⁵ David Winston, "The Iranian Component in the Bible, Apocrypha, and Qumran: A Review of the Evidence," *History of Religions* 5 (1966): 188–89.

²⁶ Winston, "The Iranian Component," 183–216. Winston's article goes to greater length in discussing the influence of Iranian religion on Judaism than on the Hebrew Bible and is especially strong on the relationship between Zoroastrianism and Qumran theology. He notes for example that such Qumran texts as the Manual of Discipline and the Thanksgiving Hymns contain Zoroas-

This argument raises in my mind the possibility that some of the mythic language in exilic and post-exilic literature is not necessarily only Canaanite, but more broadly speaking, Mesopotamia mythological language and themes that have re-emerged due to Persian influence at the old Mesopotamian centers of learning and culture. Why Deutero-Isaiah chose to use some of that material is bound up with the emergence of the theological issues that were developed to unite the Israelite community in the aftermath of the Exile and to excite them with the imminence of return to Zion promised by agents of Cyrus and the “new” politics of the region. This line of inquiry, resurrected from the history of scholarship, need not contradict the approach suggested by Levenson; rather, it provides one further reason for understanding the rise of apocalyptic, which may in fact include elements of both Canaanite and Mesopotamian myth, the latter brought back into prominence with the Persians. If it were possible to find linguistic support in the inscriptional corpus and/or be convinced that the portions of the old *Avesta* being quoted are indeed relevant and appropriate, then we may be reassured that the method being used is up to the standard of the new scholarship in Iranian studies being pursued today by Skjærvø and his followers.

There seems to be a good deal of consensus that the periodization assumed by the author of the Book of Daniel in chapters 2 and 7 in the presentation of the succession of four kingdoms is also derived from Persian apocalyptic sources. The named kingdoms are Babylonia, Media, Persia, and Macedonia, all of which ultimately give way to the Davidic messianic kingdom. This sort of thinking is quite cosmological, and Zoroaster is believed to have come along at the beginning of the final period, presuming to explain how evil came about in the world and how it should be routed out. The idea of a succession of the kingdoms is surely one of the best reasons for the emergence of dualism in the Iranian world.

Another area of possible Iranian influence is in the conception of resurrection that scholars of Hebrew Bible have traditionally assigned to Persian influence.²⁷ It is usually stated that Zoroaster believed that the spiritual and material worlds were polar opposites of a unitary whole that in resurrection

trian themes including the eternal tension between good and evil and judgment by fire. He also goes on to point out how Zoroaster is depicted in rabbinic sources. For additional information on late Second Temple Judaism and early Judaism, see Shaul Shaked, “Iranian influence on Judaism: First Century B.C.E. to Second Century C.E.,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, vol. 1: The Persian Period*, ed. William D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 308–26.

²⁷ Resurrection is often thought to be a Persian idea, and while there is no clear reference to such a view prior to the book of Daniel in the second century B.C.E., some have taken the reference in Ezekiel 37 to anticipate such a view.

were united. That is, the spiritual reality should ultimately resolve itself in a physical reality, a view deeply rooted in cosmological thinking. Yet the emergence of the idea of resurrection in Judaism may best be understood in terms of the unitary conception of the individual in which materiality is the entire human being. The Hebrew term *nephesh* (soul) connotes the intermingling of all aspects of a person: the body in all its parts and the personality of the individual. So the unity is there at the beginning and at the end. If the Mazdean idea of resurrection became known in Persian-period Israel, this notion could certainly have speeded the process whereby the nascent Israelite belief in resurrection was developed within Israel proper.

I have already alluded to the issue of Greek dualism and its possible influence on parts of the Hebrew Bible and noted elsewhere what a great impact this idea had on Jewish thought in the Roman period.²⁸ But it is not at all clear if the Greek notion of mind-body dualism left much of a trace on the Hebrew Bible except perhaps on the Book of Koheleth. In chapter 3:1–8 the list of opposites and contrasts or catalogue of polarities suggests a kind of binary or dualistic view of the world. Whether this stems from one of the dualisms we have identified or simply from the frustration of the preacher whose greatest sense of reality derived from death, the great equalizer to which all life must ultimately succumb, is impossible to say with certainty. The listing of oppositions, however, creates a kind of dynamic synergy in the rhetoric of the text, which most readers find compelling. The author is also obviously bothered by the absence of a posthumous view of retributive justice, and the author or redactor ends on a more positive note, albeit one that is questioned by critics, noting that all humankind will be held accountable for their conduct in life (12:13). So it is not at all certain that Greek dualism had much of an impact on the canonical Bible, and I believe a strong case can be made for understanding the list of binaries as evolving out of biblical dualism. By rabbinic times, however, Jewish views of afterlife greatly took into account Greek views, which continued to exist alongside the more traditional, Semitic way of thinking about life after death, in the belief in resurrection.²⁹

²⁸ See my "Jewish Culture in Greco-Roman Palestine," in *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, ed. David Biale (New York: Random House/Schocken, 2002), 142; and "The Emergence of Early Judaism and Christianity in Light of Second Temple Diversity and Qumran Sectarianism," in *One Hundred Years of American Archaeology in the Middle East: Proceedings of the American Schools of Oriental Research Centennial Celebration, Washington, DC, April 2000*, ed. Douglas R. Clark and Victor H. Matthews (Boston: ASOR, 2003), 100.

²⁹ The classic article on beliefs in Jewish afterlife in antiquity was written by Saul Lieberman, "Some Aspects of After Life in Early Rabbinic Literature," in the *Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1965).

Conclusion

It is quite clear that dualistic thinking figures prominently in biblical thought. How it has gotten there, however, is quite another matter. I have suggested that it is possible to understand fundamental aspects of Israelite cosmology within the framework of the broader context of ancient Near Eastern mythology. Indeed, fundamental aspects of Hebrew thought, especially as reflected in the priestly account of creation, elicit clear dependency on preexistent ideas of ancient myth whose appeal to ancient Israel, far from receding as time went by, seemed to increase. Moreover, the recrudescence of mythological language is particularly acute and noteworthy in Israelite apocalyptic texts, numerous examples of which have been provided from the Psalter and Genesis. The status of “bad” or “darkness” within the cosmological speculations and understandings of ancient Israel is especially related to the issue of dualism, and I have agreed with Levenson that the Hebrew Bible in many places has given power and status to that entity, either Leviathan or by another designation, thereby enhancing the power and might of YHWH when victorious.

With the emergence of biblical apocalyptic in the Persian era, numerous other features of Iranian thought re-emerge, and many of them are related to dualistic themes that figure into cosmological thinking. Since many elements of Iranian thought were part and parcel of ancient Near Eastern thought and especially Mesopotamian in origin, some of which are represented in the inscriptional record and attested in old Indo-Iranian literary forms, it is quite probable that the Persian empire and nascent Zoroastrianism served as a sieve for the emergence of some new forms of cosmological speculation in Israel. The idea of the succession of kingdoms in the Book of Daniel is drawn upon old Near Eastern ideas. Deutero-Isaiah seems particularly well informed in matters of Iranian thinking, which strengthens the case for a milieu in Israelite circles that was both familiar with and in some ways influenced by such thought. Zoroastrian religious rites, so far as we can tell, however, were rejected and condemned (e.g., Isa 50:10–11), which places Israelite borrowing from a neighboring culture into proper perspective as was the case with Canaanite culture: its rites and rituals were rejected, but its myths and literary styles were adapted and transformed to meet Israelite needs. In some cases, as we have noted, however, those borrowings led to more significant influences, as in the case of incipient biblical dualism, or Israel’s acceptance of the vibrant pagan conception of bad, evil, or chaos and their challenge to God’s created order and orderliness.

With the onset of the Greek era at the end of the fourth century B.C.E., yet another cultural source of influence became evident, especially in the form of philosophical dualism best reflected in the later writings of Philo of Alexandria. With its conception of the individual composed of a mixture of

inanimate and animate matter, or a higher and lower self, Israel's view of the *nephesh* as unitary entity was challenged. Inroads of such a Hellenistic way of thinking ultimately penetrated Jewish thought, but it took some time to occur and happened well after the biblical canon had closed. It is most clearly reflected in rabbinic views of afterlife that differ from the older view of resurrection. Philo's views, on the other hand, became more established and part of the ideology of the early Christian fathers.³⁰

The respondent to my paper when delivered at the conference, Professor Michael Rosenthal, mused that one of the most significant developments in the early modern period occurred when Spinoza freed himself of the grip of messianic apocalypticism. Quoting Gershom Scholem,³¹ Rosenthal went on to suggest that once the Jewish Enlightenment had removed the restorative element from messianic and apocalyptic views it was better able to embrace secularism and the idea of eternal progress. Surely apocalyptic dualism has been placed in the service of extremism in the modern Middle East including Israel, and there is no telling yet of the extent to which such views have prevented progress from occurring either at the peace table or in technology. Other forms of dualisms surviving into the present may also contribute to political instability. Yet that sort of speculation is beyond the scope of this paper, and I refer the reader to other contributions in this volume dealing with those issues.

³⁰ This is the view of Harry Wolfson and may be found in *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), among other writings.

³¹ Gershom Scholem, "Towards an Understanding of the Messianic idea in Judaism," in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 26.

Patrick Lee Miller

Greek Philosophical Dualism

Awaiting his execution for impiety and corrupting the youth, Socrates continued to do the very thing that had made him a scapegoat to the angry and humiliated Athenians—he philosophized. How better to prepare for death? How else to prepare for divinity? “No one may join the company of the gods,” he says, “who has not practiced philosophy and is not completely pure when he departs from life.”¹ Death alone frees us totally from the senses and pleasures of the body, Socrates claims, but in the meantime philosophy purifies: it liberates the soul, and especially its reason, from a bodily prison.² This Platonic picture of philosophy appears dualistic in at least two ways. Not only does it divide soul from body, it divides the cosmos as we perceive it through our senses from the cosmos as we know it by our reason. Along with this picture goes the practical demand that we eschew our bodies and everything that they produce in us: sensations, imagination, appetites, and emotions. Favoring pure reason in their stead, Plato promises us the consolation of divinity.

Shortly before receiving his own consolation, Socrates recounts his youthful enthusiasm for “that wisdom which they call natural science,” the philosophies of his monist predecessors.³ The first of them was Thales of Miletus.⁴ Thales seems to have supposed that all the changes of the cosmos were but variations of one substance, water.⁵ Next after him, in the same city, Anaximander likewise claimed that there was one substrate of all change and diversity. He rejected anything so definite as water, favoring simply “the indefinite” (*to apeiron*).⁶ Also from Miletus, Anaximenes returned to a definite substance, air, arguing that it ruled the cosmos just as

¹ Phaed. 82b10–11; in John M. Cooper, *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett 1997), 72. See also Phaed. 85a2.

² Ibid. 80c–84b.

³ Ibid. 96a7–8; in Cooper, 83. The Greek translated here by “natural science” is *peri phuseōs historia*. For a discussion of this enterprise in the Presocratic period, see Gerard Naddaf, *The Greek Concept of Nature* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005).

⁴ The dates of Presocratic lives are often estimates: Thales (ca. 625–545), Anaximander (ca. 610–540), Anaximenes (ca. 585–525), Xenophanes (ca. 570–478), Heraclitus (ca. 537–480), Parmenides (late sixth to mid-fifth century), Anaxagoras (ca. 500–428), Empedocles (ca. 492–432), Leucippus (ca. 470–390), Democritus (ca. 460–370); Socrates, we know for sure, died in 399 B.C.E.; his birth year has been estimated at 470.

⁵ Aristotle, *Metaph.* 983b20 = DK11A12.

⁶ Simplicius, *Phys.* 24.12–21 = DK12B1 + A9.

breath—which the early Greeks conflated with *psychē*—rules our bodies.⁷ He even explained the mutation of his principle into the many things of the cosmos by adding the mechanism of condensation and rarefaction.⁸ Despite the brilliance of this innovation, it supplied only the conditions in which a substrate changes from one thing into another. As far as we can tell, none of the Milesians explained *why* this happens.

Although Socrates does not name the philosophers he studied in his youth, he does say that his enthusiasm for them faded once he realized their silence about the real cause of anything—namely, “what was the *best* way for it to be.”⁹ Besides the Milesians, some of the major predecessors he might also have read were Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and Parmenides. From Colophon, near Miletus, Xenophanes added earth to water as his principal substances, but also exalted one god, one *theos*, writing that “completely without toil he shakes all things by the thought of his mind.”¹⁰ Later testimonies reported that Xenophanes equated this one god pantheistically with the cosmos itself.¹¹ Other accounts thus associated his monism with that of Parmenides and the “Eleatic tribe”¹² who argued far more stringently than any other monists that existence must be not merely one,¹³ but even unchanging and homogeneous.¹⁴ For his part, Heraclitus of Ephesus tolerated change, even the ceaseless flux for which he is famous,¹⁵ and yet he too was a monist. Introducing fire as a principle, he equated it with his *logos* (account).¹⁶ “Listening not to me but to the *logos*,” he began his book, “it is wise to agree that all things are one.”¹⁷

In Socrates’ search for a philosophy that would make goodness causally efficacious, he was no doubt disappointed by the fifth-century Atomists,

⁷ Aëtius, 1.3.4 = DK13B2. For the association of *psychē* and breath, see David B. Claus, *Toward the Soul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 61 (citing II. 22.467). Diogenes Laërtius, however, writes that Xenophanes “was the first to declare that...the soul is breath” (9.19).

⁸ Theophrastus, quoted by Simplicius, Phys. 24.26–25.1 = DK13A5.

⁹ Phaed. 97c8; in Cooper, 84 (italics added).

¹⁰ Simplicius, Phys. 23.19 = DK21B25; trans. James H. Lesher, *Xenophanes: Fragments* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 33.

¹¹ Simplicius, Phys. (Comm. Arist. Gr. IX, 28 = Dox. Gr. 483) = DK28A8; Sextus Empiricus, Pyr. 1.224 = DK21A35.

¹² Plato, Soph. 242d3–5 = DK21A29; Aristotle, Metaph. 986b21–22 = DK21A30.

¹³ Simplicius, Phys. 145.1–146.25 = DK28B8.5–6.

¹⁴ Ibid. = DK28B8.1–33; Ibid. 111.18–112.15 = DK30B7.

¹⁵ DK22B12, 49a, 60, 91.

¹⁶ In the fifth century, *logos* could mean any number of things, but all were related in some way to speech, thought, or measure. For an exhaustive list of meanings and citations, see William K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (6 vols; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 420–24. For another logos of *logos*, see Francis E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 110–12.

¹⁷ Hippolytus, Haer. 9.9.1 = 22B50; trans. Richard D. McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), 34.

Leucippus and Democritus, whose cosmos was an amoral collision of atoms in a void.¹⁸ His interest in philosophy was rekindled, however, when he heard someone reading from a book of Anaxagoras—the first of the major Asian philosophers to inhabit Athens—who claimed that *nous* (mind, thought, or reason) directs and causes everything.¹⁹ “I was delighted with this cause,” he says, “and it seemed to me good that *nous* should be the cause of all. I thought that if this were so the directing *nous* would direct everything and arrange each thing in the way that was best.”²⁰ In other words, Socrates initially thought that Anaxagoras had supplied his cosmos with efficacious value, an ultimate goal, the best good. By contrast with the monism of his other predecessors, then, Anaxagoras seemed to offer a dualism between *nous* and the rest of the cosmos. Socrates read his writings quickly, eager to learn about this best good that *nous* seemed aimed to effect.

Socrates’ hope was soon dashed once he recognized that Anaxagoras’s *nous* was not directing anything toward the best; in fact, it seemed to play no role whatsoever in explanation.²¹ Had he asked Anaxagoras about his predicament—“why am I in this cell?”—the answer would not have been that *nous* is directing him and everything in the cosmos towards the best. The answer he instead imagines receiving is a parody of materialist monism: “the reason that I am sitting here is because my body consists of bones and sinews, because the bones are hard and are separated by joints, that the sinews are such as to contract and relax,” and so on.²² To be fair to Anax-

¹⁸ See, e.g., Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 7.135 = DK68B9 (=B125); and Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1071b33–35 = DK67A18. Plato’s total neglect of the Atomists—and especially of Democritus, with whose productive life his own overlapped—is quite remarkable. The dialogues make no explicit mention of Democritus anywhere, although Plato may have him in mind when he describes the intellectual battle between materialists and formalists, a battle he likens to the Gigantomachy (*Soph.* 246a3–c3).

¹⁹ *Nous* has been translated by “intelligence,” “mind,” “thought,” “reason,” and “understanding,” among other English words. This diversity arises not only from the usual difficulties of translation, but more so from the long and distinguished career of the word and its cognates in Greek philosophy. Most notably, Plato appropriated it to name his highest epistemic state, as well as his highest god; Aristotle did the same, while also using it as the name of the highest part of the human soul; finally, Plotinus chose it as the name for his second hypostasis. Stephen Menn, *Plato on God as Nous* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), 14–18, describes the difficulty of translating *nous* and exposes the inadequacy of the standard translations. To use one of them always, in the interests of an artificial consistency, would sometimes become awkward. We shall thus vary our translation when required by the context, but shall favor “thought” when appropriate. To begin with Anaxagoras, this is the translation favored by Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 185–98.

²⁰ *Phaed.* 97c2–6; slightly rev. from trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 84 (italics added).

²¹ *Ibid.* 98b7–c2.

²² *Ibid.* 98c5–8; trans. Grube in Cooper, *Plato*, 85.

agoras, he might have given *nous* more of a role than Socrates allows. His bones and sinews could have been arranged in this way by *nous*'s providential rotation of the cosmos.²³ Be that as it may, Anaxagoras never explained *why* the cosmos was rotated by *nous* in this particular way rather than another, and Plato's Socrates thereby considered it limited, but not irrelevant. After all, these monists had supplied the necessary conditions of an event; the best good would add its sufficient condition. Socrates compares his philosophical predecessors to "people groping in the dark," since they sought only the necessary conditions, not the sufficient condition, which he calls the real cause. "Imagine not being able to distinguish the real cause from that without which the cause would not be able to act as cause."²⁴

This was a perennial difficulty of Presocratic monism. Successors to the Milesians may have supplied explanations of why the cosmos changed—by adding a *theos*, a *logos*, or a *nous*—but their additions only pushed the question one step further back. Why, it remained to be explained, did these principles act? Why, Socrates wonders, is it *best* for anything to be the way it is, let alone to change into something else? Why, to return to the question he imagines posing to Anaxagoras, is he *here*, sitting in this prison cell? The question is not idle. In *Crito*, a dialogue whose narrative precedes that of *Phaedo*, Socrates' devoted friend has begged him to slip past the conniving warden.²⁵ Socrates refuses, arguing notoriously that he is bound to obey the laws, even now when the jury has applied them unfairly. The laws have safeguarded him his whole life, and by his lifelong presence in Athens he has tacitly agreed to follow them, whatever they might require of him.²⁶ To ask "Why am I here?" in *Phaedo*, then, is to return to this reasoning of *Crito* and ask again, "Why is it best for me to be here?" In *Phaedo*, the question drops its political guise and assumes a deeper, cosmological significance.

Phaedo is a thoroughly Pythagorean dialogue, a fact which Plato signals by several dramatic clues. The location, for example, is Phlius, a center of Pythagoreanism in Plato's lifetime. As the dialogue begins, moreover, a certain Echecrates entices Phaedo to recount Socrates' deathbed conversation about the immortality of the soul, a central Pythagorean doctrine. Echecrates was himself a student of a famous fifth-century Pythagorean,²⁷ Philolaus, who also taught Socrates' two main interlocutors in the dialogue,

²³ See, e.g., Simplicius, *Phys.* 300.31–301.1 = 59B13.

²⁴ *Phaed.* 99b2–4; trans. Grube in Cooper, *Plato*, 85.

²⁵ *Crit.* 44e–46a.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 50a–52d.

²⁷ D.L. 8.46 = Aristoxenus fr. 19 Wehrli.

Simmias and Cebes.²⁸ Beyond these Pythagorean characters, location, and topic, the dialogue advances distinctly Pythagorean doctrines, as we shall see when we return to it at the end of this essay. For now, let us notice an important fact for our discussion of Greek dualism: the dialogue in which Socrates expresses his disappointment with his monist predecessors is the same dialogue in which he advances a variety of Pythagorean dualism.

We begin by exploring Pythagoreanism, a dualism that should hold a special place in the history of philosophy and religion. After all, when scholars of religion discuss dualism, they most often mean a cosmological division between two world principles, especially one that is good and one that is evil. When scholars of modern philosophy discuss dualism, however, they almost always mean a psychological division between two elements of the human, especially between the mind and the body.²⁹ A discussion of the Pythagoreans and Plato complements a volume on dualism in religion and philosophy because they propose divisions of both sorts. Indeed, for this philosophical tradition, these two sorts of dualism are related by a fundamental commitment to an ethics of purification and divinization. For the Pythagoreans, Plato, and the many thinkers indebted to them, as we shall see, the cosmos and the human microcosm must both be divided in order to preserve the pure thought of divinity.

Pythagorean Cosmology

Little is known about Pythagoras himself, and the religious devotion he inspired in followers throughout antiquity has made it difficult to separate fact from fiction in their accounts of him. Yet most agree that he was born on Samos—near the Ionian coast—sometime in the middle of the sixth century B.C.E., and that in approximately 530 he established a colony of followers in Croton on the coast of southern Italy.³⁰ This society persisted at least a century; the school of thought it initiated continued through much, if not all, of antiquity.³¹ “The Pythagorean tradition admits of a

²⁸ Simmias and Cebes are said (Phaed. 61d6–7) to have spent time in the company of Philolaus. The dramatic locale is given at 57a. As for Echecrates, Diogenes Laertius (8.46) reports that “the last of the Pythagoreans, whom Aristoxenus in his time saw, were Xenophilus from Thracian Chalcidice, Phanton of Phlius, and Echecrates, Diocles, and Polymnastus, also of Phlius, who were pupils of Philolaus and Eurytus of Tarentum.”

²⁹ An example of a modern philosopher’s discussion of dualism can be found in William Lycan’s contribution to this volume, “Recent Naturalistic Dualisms.”

³⁰ Cristoph Riedweg, *Pythagoras: His Life, Teaching, and Influence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 45–46, 52, describes the intellectual climate of Samos in Pythagoras’s early life as well as the earliest evidence (Heraclitus, DK22B81) for his establishment of a school.

³¹ By neglecting to discuss Pythagoras, and instead discussing Pythagoreanism, we follow Aristotle, who “rarely mentions Pythagoras, more frequently speaking of ‘those who are called “Pythagoreans”’ or ‘the Italians,’ as though unwilling to attribute the doctrines he reports to Pythagoras himself.” Cf. McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 80.

wide range of philosophical ideas and interests,” warns Carl Huffman, “and we should be wary of assuming a rigid set of philosophical dogmas accepted by all Pythagoreans.”³² What united them, it seems, was a way of life. Speaking not of Pythagoreanism exclusively but of ancient philosophical schools more generally, Pierre Hadot has concluded that they were each united by “the choice of a certain way of life and existential option which demands from the individual a total change of lifestyle, a conversion of one’s entire being.”³³ We shall examine the conversion expected of Pythagoreans when we come to our section on their psychology; in the meantime we should note, again with Hadot, that “this existential option, in turn, implies a certain vision of the world.”³⁴ Let us try, then, to reconstruct the vision of the world—a dualistic vision—shared by most Pythagoreans.

We must first be wary of confusing the so-called Neopythagoreanism of Roman times, which produced most of the extant accounts,³⁵ with the pristine Pythagoreanism of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. Walter Burkert has convinced most scholars that the version of Pythagorean philosophy preserved in later antiquity was the product of Plato and his school.³⁶ We may avoid this difficult controversy by limiting our sources to those who either preceded Plato or would have been aware of any Platonic distortions of the tradition, if such distortions occurred. Two authors will prove especially helpful: Philolaus of Croton (ca. 470–390), who was the only pre-Platonic Pythagorean to publish their doctrines, and Aristotle, who knew Plato well enough to distinguish pre-Platonic Pythagoreanism from his own teacher’s appropriations and elaborations of it.³⁷

³² Carl Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton: Pythagorean and Presocratic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 10.

³³ Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002), 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁵ The most famous Neopythagorean was Numenius of Apamea, whose dualistic thought F. Copleston describes in these terms: “Dualism is very apparent in the psychology of Numenius, since he postulates two souls in man, a rational soul and an irrational soul, and declares the entry of the soul into the body as something evil, as a ‘fall.’ He seems also to have taught the existence of a good and bad world-soul.” Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 448.

³⁶ Charles H. Kahn, “Pythagorean Philosophy Before Plato,” in *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Alexander P. D. Mourelatos (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1974), 1284. Because of this importance of Plato to later Pythagoreanism, the Neopythagoreans became indistinguishable from Platonists, and vice versa. Peter Kingsley has disputed Burkert’s point, arguing that Plato, especially in his myths, offers both as faithful and as eclectic a record of early Pythagorean ideas as does any other source. Cf. Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 217, 331.

³⁷ This is the method adopted by both Burkert and Huffman. “All the basic conceptual terms which Aristotle assigns to the Pythagoreans,” Huffman writes, “are also found in Fragments 1–7 of

They are now most widely known by the theorem that bears their name. However, the “Pythagorean” theorem was discovered by the Babylonians a millennium or more before the birth of Pythagoras.³⁸ Borrowing from the East their knowledge of harmonics and astronomy as well as mathematics, the Pythagoreans introduced into Greece the arithmetic regularity of plucked strings and the geometric patterns of orbiting stars.³⁹ In harmonics, for example, they took strings of different materials and showed that they could always produce the same chords so long as they maintained the same ratios of their lengths: 1:2, for instance, sounded a note and the same note an octave lower; 2:3 and 3:4 sounded the perfect fifth and the perfect fourth respectively.⁴⁰ This fact suggested that qualities, like sound, could be reduced to quantities and that mathematics revealed the secret order of the cosmos. As a symbol of this order, the Pythagoreans revered the “tetractys (fourness) of the decad,” an equilateral triangle of sides four units long. By arranging ten pebbles as a triangle, placing one at its apex, two in the second row, three in the third, and four in the fourth, they symbolized the harmonic ratios: 1:2:3:4.⁴¹ Of all the special meanings they assigned to numbers,⁴² the cosmic significance they devoted to four and ten thus appears most readily understandable.

Philolaus.” Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, 28. Also helpful—especially when we come to Pythagorean psychology—will be fragments of Xenophanes (DK21B7), Heraclitus (DK22B40, 22B129), and Ion (DK36B4), and a comment of Herodotus (4.95). These passages appear together in McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 81–82. With so little contemporaneous evidence, a judicious use of later sources will sometimes be necessary to round out the picture. As for our two principal sources, Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, 1.2, believes that that they are one, that Aristotle based his account of Pythagoreanism on Philolaus’s book. Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 79, by contrast, argues that Aristotle based his account on more than Philolaus.

³⁸ McEvelley 2002, 85, citing Neugebauer 1957, 36. See also Kahn 2001, 32–33, and Burkert 2004, 65.

³⁹ Thomas McEvelley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies* (New York: Allworth Press, 2002), 67–97.

⁴⁰ Stobaeus, Ecl. 1.21.7d = DK44B6a. See also Aristotle, fr. 162, quoted at Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 83. The series continues, so that 4:5 yields the major third, and 5:6 the minor third.

⁴¹ Sextus Empiricus, Math. 7.94–95, quoted and discussed at McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 93. Although Sextus is late, he appears to be borrowing from Posidonius (Kahn, *Pythagorean Philosophy Before Plato*, 31, n. 16), and the doctrines he reports agree with the fragment of Philolaus already cited (Stobaeus, Ecl. 1.21.7d = 44B6a). Another rationale for the perfection of ten was that 1 represented a point; 2, a line; 3, a plane figure (the triangle); and 4, a solid (the pyramid). “All these are primary and the starting points for the other figures of each kind,” wrote Speusippus (fr. 4 [Lang] = DK44A13), quoted and discussed at McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 100.

⁴² See, e.g., Aristotle, *Metaph.* 985b28–33 = DK58B4; and Alexander, *Comm. Metaph.* 38.10–39.20. For discussions, see McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 108–13, and Kahn, *Pythagorean Philosophy Before Plato*, 32–33.

According to some accounts, Pythagoras was the first to use *kosmos* to speak of the heavens.⁴³ Whoever used it first, the word signified both order and ornament, an ambiguity from which we derive “cosmetic” as well as “cosmos.” It was thus natural for the Greek philosophers who made the *kosmos* the object of their inquiry to conceive the universe as both ordered and beautiful. The Pythagoreans specifically believed this *kosmos* to express *harmonia*.⁴⁴ The extent of this belief becomes more intelligible once it is recognized that *harmonia* not only came to mean “harmony,” as we know it from music, but also preserved its original meaning: “joint,” “fitting together,” or “composition.”⁴⁵ The Pythagoreans thus believed that the spheres of the heavenly bodies sounded a musical harmony corresponding to the mathematical ratios of their composition.

The Pythagoreans assumed there were ten such bodies, thinking “the number ten is something perfect and encompasses the entire nature of numbers,”⁴⁶ apparently because of their reverence for the tetractys. The precise identity of all ten is unclear, as is the status of cosmic fire among them.⁴⁷ What is clear about fire, in particular, is that Philolaus placed it both at the boundary of the cosmos and at its center.⁴⁸ This boundary fire was indisputably the stars; the central fire may have been that of the underworld.⁴⁹ Pythagorean inhabitants of volcanic Sicily and southern Italy were well situated to observe such fire, as Peter Kingsley argues, and the association between the fire of the stars and the fire under the earth will become important when we come later to Empedocles’ notorious leap into Mount Etna. In the meantime, wherever exactly they placed their central fire, the Pythagoreans believed it was orbited by the other heavenly bodies harmoniously—which is to say, with both mathematical regularity and musical beauty.⁵⁰ Their legends claimed that only Pythagoras himself could hear this music.

⁴³ Other sources attributed the coinage to Anaximander or Anaximenes (Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 108–9), whereas Diogenes Laertius (8.48) and Aëtius (2.1.1) attribute it to Pythagoras.

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1090a20–25.

⁴⁵ McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 93.

⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Metaph.* 986a2–12 = DK58B4; trans. McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 105.

⁴⁷ For brief introductions to Pythagorean astronomy and its controversies, see Kahn, “Pythagorean Philosophy Before Plato,” 25–27, and McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 104–7. These discussions credit Aristotle’s account. For a very different treatment, which begins with a rejection of Aristotle’s testimony, see Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 172–213.

⁴⁸ Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 1.22.1d; cited in Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 179.

⁴⁹ Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy*, 172–94.

⁵⁰ Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, 283.

Though it surrounds us all, we notice it no more than does a blacksmith the habitual noises of his shop.⁵¹

Less fancifully, the Pythagoreans believed that everything, both in the heavens and below, exhibited mathematical ratios. "All things that are known have number," wrote Philolaus, "for without this nothing whatever could possibly be thought of or known."⁵² Numerical form, in other words, is necessary for intelligibility. Whether or not the Pythagoreans also considered it sufficient for existence, and what it would mean if they did, is a matter of controversy. Aristotle reports that they believed "the whole heaven (*ouranos*)...is numbers."⁵³ Since they equated *ouranos* and *kosmos*, this was to say that they believed the cosmos to be numbers. In the same vein, writes Aristotle, they believed "number was the substance of all things"⁵⁴ and that "sensible substances are formed out of it."⁵⁵ Huffman rejects Aristotle's testimony on this point, especially when it comes to the specific equation of the number one and the substance of the central fire.⁵⁶ It is "impossible to imagine that he [Philolaus] confused the arithmetical unit with the central fire," he writes, "for if he did, his arithmetical unit is more than a bare monad with position; it is also fiery and orbited by ten bodies."⁵⁷ As odd as this equation may seem to us, Charles H. Kahn sees no reason to doubt Aristotle's report of it,⁵⁸ because it does agree with Philolaus's own statement that "the first thing fitted together, *the one in the center of the sphere*, is called the hearth."⁵⁹

More generally, if Aristotle's report is correct, and number really was for the Pythagoreans the substance of all things, they believed numerical form to be what he called the *archē* (or principle) of the cosmos. This technical term is one component of Aristotelian philosophy that will help us to appreciate the novelty of Pythagoreanism; another is his account of the four causes: material, formal, efficient, and final.⁶⁰ By this account, for example,

⁵¹ The analogy is Aristotle's: Cael. 290b12–19.

⁵² Stobaeus, Ecl. 1.21.7d = DK44B6a; trans. McKirahan in *The Presocratics*, ed. P. Curd (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1995), 23.

⁵³ Metaph. 986a21.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 987a20 = DK58B8; trans. Ross in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Barnes, 1561. See also Metaph. 986a16–17.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 1080b17–21; Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1708.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, 57–64.

⁵⁷ Huffman, Philolaus of Croton, 205; cited in Charles Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans: A Brief History* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 2001), 27.

⁵⁸ Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans*, 27; see also Schibli, "On 'The One' in Philolaus, Fragment 7," *The Classical Quarterly* 46 (1996): 114–30.

⁵⁹ Stobaeus, Ecl. 1.21.8 (1.189.17 Wachsmuth); trans. Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, 227 (italics added).

⁶⁰ Metaph. 983a24–32 distinguishes the four causes, but they are more thoroughly distinguished at Phys. 194b16–195a3, and then again at 198a14–21.

the form or shape of a house is easily distinguished as a cause not only from the house's matter (its wood and nails), but also from both its efficient and its final cause. The efficient is a builder—or, more specifically, what it is that makes a builder a builder: his craft (*technē*) of building.⁶¹ At the very least, the final cause is shelter. This four-fold scheme rarely applies to Aristotle's predecessors as neatly as he thought, but because he is one of our two principal sources for early Pythagoreanism, familiarity with it helps us to recognize any distortions it may have introduced into his reports.⁶²

Beginning with the Milesians in the sixth century, most of the early Greek philosophers isolated some one thing to be “that of which all existing things are composed and that out of which they originally came into being.”⁶³ Their principles were at first purely material, according to Aristotle, although each was animate in some way. Anaximenes, for instance, said that his air rules the whole cosmos, “just as our soul, being air, holds us together and controls us.”⁶⁴ Not long after the Milesians, Xenophanes made earth and water the generative material principles of the cosmos,⁶⁵ but he also made one *theos* effective over everything with the power of his thought alone.⁶⁶ As early as the sixth century, then, Greek philosophy became acquainted with the notion of a distinct efficient cause, even if Aristotle would not recognize its appearance until the late fifth century, with Anaxagoras's *nous*.⁶⁷

In the beginning, wrote Anaxagoras, “all things were together.”⁶⁸ Nothing was apart from this primal cosmic mixture except *nous* (thought), which remained pure and began its rotation of the cosmos in order to “set in order all things.” By this providential rotation, Anaxagoras effectively equipped the one god of Xenophanes with a mechanism of movement, imagining *nous* as a cosmic centrifuge.⁶⁹ As we have seen, Socrates was first enthused by this pure *nous*, even if he was soon disappointed, and Plato would even-

⁶¹ Phys. 195b22–25.

⁶² See Metaph. 1.3–6. This text begins “We must inquire of what kind are the causes,” and then proceeds to tell a short history of Greek philosophy. On the anachronism of Aristotle's causal analysis of the Presocratics, see Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 63. For a more recent, and more favorable, discussion of Aristotle's use of his causal theory as a framework for his history of preceding philosophy, see Catherine Collobert, “Aristotle's Review of the Presocratics: Is Aristotle Finally a Historian of Philosophy?,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40 (2002): 281–95.

⁶³ Aristotle Metaph. 1.3.983b6–27 = DK11A12; trans. McKirahan in Curd, *The Presocratics*, 10.

⁶⁴ Aëtius, 1.3.4 = DK13B2; trans. McKirahan in Curd, *The Presocratics*, 14.

⁶⁵ Philoponus, Phys. 1.5.125 = DK21B29. See also DK21B33.

⁶⁶ Supra note 10.

⁶⁷ Metaph. 1.3.984b15–20.

⁶⁸ Simplicius, Phys. 155.26 = DK59B1; trans. McKirahan in Curd, *The Presocratics*, 54.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 35.14–16 = DK59B9.

tually install it within his own cosmos as a god, making it heed his final cause, his Form of the Good.⁷⁰ We shall say more about Plato and his supreme Form later; for now we should note how it incorporated the Pythagoreans' innovation.⁷¹ Their use of number introduces formal causes into Greek philosophy,⁷² as Aristotle noted, since they showed that harmonies were not to be explained by appeal to the matter of plucked strings but instead to their ratios—that is, to the numerical form.

The Pythagoreans considered each number to be one of two types: *apeiron* or *peperasmēnon*—indefinite or defined, or alternatively, as most translators prefer, unlimited or limited.⁷³ According to Huffman, this obscure distinction, rather than number itself, was primary in Philolaus's system.⁷⁴ After all, he began *On Nature*, the book in which he scandalously divulged Pythagorean doctrines, with this sentence: "Nature in the cosmos was composed out of unlimiteds [*apeirōn*] and limiters; both the cosmos as a whole and everything in it."⁷⁵ Kahn has explained this obscure distinction by recalling the Pythagoreans' use of pebbles to generate numbers, introducing space or void between them. "The same process that generates the numbers," the Pythagoreans may have reasoned, "will generate geometrical solids and the visible heavens."⁷⁶ Though obscure, this claim helps make sense of one still more obscure. Aristotle wrote that the Pythagoreans imagined "the world inhaling also the void which distinguishes the natures of things, as if it were what separates and distinguishes the terms of a series."⁷⁷ Perhaps, then, the central fire, the one at the hearth of the cosmos, inhaled

⁷⁰ The details of this assimilation are too complicated for our purposes, but they are recounted in Menn, *Plato on God as Nous*.

⁷¹ Metaph. 988b6–15. See also Phaed. 96a–99d, Resp. 508e–509a, and 511b–c.

⁷² Ibid. 987b10–11.

⁷³ See, e.g., Metaph. 986a23. The only exception was the number one, which was of both types (Metaph. 986a20). As for the Greek terms, a comment is in order about their translation. The first we have already encountered with the mention of Anaximander. His first principle was the *apeiron*, and we translated it there as the "indefinite." In order to appreciate the continuity of Pythagorean thought with its precedents, then, it will be helpful to remember that the term persists, even though it is most often given a different translation in discussions of Pythagoreanism—namely, "unlimited." Translators choose this English approximation because the second Greek term with which it is contrasted above, *peperasmēnon*, derives from *peras*, which is best translated as "limit."

⁷⁴ Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, 39.

⁷⁵ D.L. 8.85 = DK44B1; slightly rev. from Curd, *The Presocratics*, 22. The Greek verb is *harmozō*, and it exhibits the same range of meanings as *harmonia*: "to join," "to compose," and also "to harmonize."

⁷⁶ Kahn, "Pythagorean Philosophy Before Plato," 173; cited in Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, 204.

⁷⁷ Aristotle, Phys. 213b25–26; trans. Hardie and Gaye in Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 363.

the void, the way fire must inhale the air, and thus generated the other numbers, which is to say, the cosmos.

Recalling the Pythagoreans' musical investigations, Francis M. Cornford offered another way of understanding the obscure distinction between limit and unlimited. Taking the unlimited continuum of sound made by strings of indefinite lengths, he suggested, the Pythagoreans imposed limit on it by fretting their strings according to definite ratios. They thus produced the harmonies already described. In doing so, "the unlimited is no longer an orderless continuum; it is confined within an order, a *cosmos*, by the imposition of Limit."⁷⁸ There were many unlimiteds according to the Pythagoreans, not simply the one *apeiron* of Anaximander. Limiting their unlimiteds—or defining their indefinites—the Pythagoreans not only posited two sets of principles, they moralized them. Thus Aristotle: "evil belongs to the unlimited, as the Pythagoreans conjectured, and good to the limited."⁷⁹ In so doing, they introduced into Greek philosophy a cosmic and moral dualism that emerges more fully in another report of Aristotle. "Others of this same school," he wrote, "declare that there are ten principles (*archai*), arranged in parallel columns:

limit	unlimited
odd	even
one	plurality
right	left
male	female
at rest	moving
straight	bent
light	darkness
good	evil
square	oblong ⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Francis Cornford, "Mysticism and Science in the Pythagorean Tradition," *The Classical Quarterly* 16 (1922): 145. Cited in Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 248.

⁷⁹ Eth. nic. 1106b29–30. For the equation of justice with number, see Metaph. 985b28–33 = DK58B4.

⁸⁰ This translation and arrangement of Metaphysics 986a22–26 appears in McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 107. For a discussion of *archē* (pl., *archai*), a central concept in early Greek philosophy, see Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 57, and Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 23–25. From this word, which we shall translate as "principle," we derive "archaic," "archaeology," "architecture," etc.

We cannot be sure of the list's rationale. The selection of opposites and their arrangement have puzzled commentators, beginning with Aristotle himself.⁸¹ No scholar since has successfully explained the whole list, although progress has certainly been made to explain some of the opposing pairs.⁸² The simplest such example is the opposition of square and oblong. Since Pythagorean numbers were concrete arrangements of pebbles, or figures, the number 2 was considered oblong, since two pebbles form a rectangle (of dimensions 1 x 2); by contrast, the number 4 was a square (2 x 2).⁸³ The ratio of its sides was thus 2/2, or 1. In fact, square numbers always exhibited the ratio of 1: 2/2, 3/3, 4/4, etc. Limited in this way, their ratios differed from those of the oblong numbers, which exhibited unlimitedly many ratios: 1/2, 2/3, 3/4, etc. In one stroke, then, we see a connection between *square*, *limit*, and *one*, all of which are ranked together with good in the first column of the Pythagorean table of opposition; correlatively, we see the connection between *oblong*, *unlimited*, and *plurality*, which are ranked together with evil in the second.⁸⁴

No early text illuminates the Pythagoreans' reason for assigning light and darkness to their respective columns, but in the Roman era several authors went so far as to claim that Pythagoras himself studied under Zoroaster, or at least the Persian Magi.⁸⁵ This story goes back to Aristotle's student, Aristoxenus,⁸⁶ who apparently wrote that "Pythagoras went to Babylon and learnt from Zaratas that Light and Darkness were the male and female principles from which the world was created."⁸⁷ Even if the tradition were baseless, as William K. C. Guthrie observes, "at least it is evidence that a resemblance between the Greek and Persian systems was remarked

⁸¹ At *Metaph.* 986b4–6, Aristotle writes, "how these principles can be brought together under the causes we have named has not been clearly stated by them" (in Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1560). But he also says that "the principles in the second column are indefinite because they are privative," a notion he then proceeds to explain (Barnes, 344). For a modern treatment, see McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 108.

⁸² The articles of Cornford (1922, 1923) made the biggest strides. The chapters of Guthrie 1962 (212–306) and McKirahan 1994 (79–116, but especially 94–97) summarize the progress that has been made in the meantime.

⁸³ From this system we derive some of our own mathematical terminology. The square root of a number, for example, is the length of its sides when it is formed as a square.

⁸⁴ Explanations for some of the other oppositions can be found in McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 94–108, particularly 107–8.

⁸⁵ These accounts are: Cicero (106–43), Strabo (63–21), Plutarch (50–120), Apuleius (120–170), Clement of Alexandria (150–216), Hippolytus (170–236), Porphyry (234–305), and Iamblichus (245–325). For full citations and discussion see Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 217–18, 253–54.

⁸⁶ Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 249–50.

⁸⁷ Martin L. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 32. Hippolytus (fr. 13 Wehrli, Haer. 1.2.12) attributes the story to Aristoxenus and Diodorus of Eretria. "Zaratas," adds West, "is of course Zoroaster" (32, n. 2).

by the fourth century.”⁸⁸ But is it baseless? Were the chronology of Zoroastrian texts not so problematic, a hypothesis of influence would be difficult to resist, especially since the Persians controlled many of the Greeks of Asia Minor after 546.⁸⁹ Besides a moralized distinction between light and darkness,⁹⁰ Zoroastrianism and Pythagoreanism shared also an emphasis on “purity of thought [*humata*], word [*hukta*], and deed [*huvarashta*].”⁹¹ As we shall see in the next section, pure thought was important to the Pythagoreans because of their doctrine of the transmigration of souls (*metempsychōsis*), whose provenance appears to be still further east. For only by thinking purely could Pythagoreans hope, in the manner of the Indian yogi, to escape embodiment and join the divine.

Pythagorean Psychology

In the earliest extant report about Pythagoras, Xenophanes famously said that he had interceded on behalf of a beaten puppy with these words: “Stop, don’t beat him, since it is the soul of a man, a friend of mine, which I recognized when I heard it crying.”⁹² This belief in transmigration linked

⁸⁸ Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 250. See also Walter Burkert, *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis: Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 66, and Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 7–8. Burkert provides a short history of scholarly trends about the attribution of Greek ideas to the East (49–70).

⁸⁹ For a summary of the problems, see Burkert, *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis*, 103–5. As for correspondence, the Zoroastrian cosmogony, or Bundahišn, begins tantalizingly: “Ormazd was on high in omniscience and goodness, for boundless time He was ever in the light.” Against this good god was ranged Ahriman, the evil, who “was abased in slowness of knowledge,” and “darkness is his place,” 1.1; trans. Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 45; see also 1.39–42. Unfortunately, the so-called Greater Bundahišn dates from the late ninth century C.E., more than a millennium after the early Pythagoreans we have been discussing. But as Prods Oktor Skjærvø writes in his contribution to this volume, these late texts “encapsulate the orally transmitted knowledge of the priests of that time and so contain material that reaches far back into the history of Zoroastrianism.” Skjærvø, “Zoroastrian Dualism,” 58. More specifically, as Martin L. West observes, the Bundahišn is a commentary “on the Dāmdāt Nask, one of the lost portions of the Avesta, presumably dating from the Achaemenid period,” which began a generation before Pythagoras formed his society. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient*, 30.

⁹⁰ This distinction became canonical in Greek philosophy, but could also be traced to Hesiod, Theog. 123–25. See Cornford, “Plato and Orpheus,” 441. See also James A. Notopoulos, “The Symbolism of the Sun and Light in the Republic of Plato, I,” *Classical Philology* 39 (1994): 163–72; James A. Notopoulos, “The Symbolism of the Sun and Light in the Republic of Plato, II,” *Classical Philology* 39 (1994): 223–40; and especially Carl J. Classen, “Licht und Dunkel in der frühgriechischen Philosophie,” in *Studium Generale* 18 (1965): 97–116.

⁹¹ Solomon A. Nigosian, *The Zoroastrian Faith: Tradition & Modern Research* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), 91. Although written in Sasanian times, some of the Vidēvdāt’s prohibitions appear in classical authors. Jamsheed K. Choksy, *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism: Triumph over Evil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 85, 87, citing Xenophon and Ammianus Marcellinus.

⁹² D.L., 8.36 = Xenophanes DK21B7; trans. McKirahan, in Curd, *The Presocratics*, 18.

the cosmological dualism of the Pythagoreans with their psychological dualism. By aligning one's soul with the good side of the cosmic divide, and by practicing purification (*katharsis*), one could ensure a better incarnation in one's next life. "Ce qui semble spécialement pythagoricien," writes Louis Moulinier, "c'est l'application à des faits psychologiques du mot *katharsis* que l'usage ordinaire réservait à des fait matériels."⁹³ The goal of this purification was not just a better incarnation but an escape (*lusi*) from the tedious cycle of embodiment altogether. For "the soul has been yoked to the body as a punishment," wrote Philolaus, "it is buried in it as though in a tomb."⁹⁴ To escape the body, paradoxically, was to escape death.

Even to skeptical scholars, India has seemed the most plausible source of this eschatology.⁹⁵ "That an Ionian of the sixth century," writes Burkert, "should assimilate elements of Babylonian mathematics, Iranian religion, and even Indian metempsychosis doctrine is intrinsically possible."⁹⁶ More recently, scholars have become more confident of this pedigree. "The only religious tradition in which the doctrine of transmigration is at home from a very early period is that of India in pre-Buddhist times," writes Kahn, so "we can at least see that the...legend of Pythagoras' journey to India in search of the wisdom of the East may very well contain a grain of allegorical truth."⁹⁷ However, the case for Indian influence upon the Pythagoreans rests not simply upon their adoption of the doctrine of transmigration, but also upon its parallel tripartite structure. Thomas McEvilley has argued that *saṃsāra* becomes *metempsychōsis*, *karma* becomes *katharsis*, and *mokṣa* becomes *lusi*.⁹⁸ Besides presenting several plausible routes of transmission,⁹⁹ McEvilley also shows how "in Greece this doctrine seems to have appeared in the seventh or sixth century with little or no sign of develop-

⁹³ Louis Moulinier, *Le pur et l'impur dans la pensée des Grecs* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 119.

⁹⁴ Clement, Strom. III iii 17.1 DK44B14; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 2001), 181.

⁹⁵ Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 251, cites Zeller and Ueberweg-Praechter.

⁹⁶ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 299.

⁹⁷ Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans*, 19. See also Theodor Gomperz, *The Greek Thinkers: A History of Ancient Philosophy*, 4 vols. (London: John Murray, 1920), 126–27. Similarly, after presenting unmistakable parallels between the Heraclitean and Upaniṣadic cycle of the elements, West remarks "that the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad alone throws more light on what Heraclitus was talking about than all the remains of the other Presocratics together." West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient*, 201–2; for the abundant similarities between Heraclitus and Eastern ideas, see West, 165–202. For a summary of his similarities with the Upaniṣads, in particular, see Thomas McEvilley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies* (New York: Allworth Press, 2002), 36–44.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1–18.

ment”¹⁰⁰ in works with other Eastern elements and remained culturally isolated from the dominant religion of the epic poets. The Indian version, by contrast, “seems to have crystallized in the seventh century, after a series of developmental stages involving the progressive synthesis of a number of elements from different sources.”¹⁰¹

A Byzantine encyclopedia of ancient lore, the *Suda*, claims that it was Pherecydes of Syros (sixth century B.C.E.) who introduced the doctrine of reincarnation into Greece.¹⁰² His father’s name, Babys, “belongs to a group ...which are certainly of Asiatic origin,”¹⁰³ and this is only one of several puzzlepieces assembled by Martin L. West to argue that Pherecydes imported into Greece Iranian and Indian doctrines, not the least of which was reincarnation.¹⁰⁴ Later biographers made him the teacher of Pythagoras,¹⁰⁵ and some modern scholars credit the story.¹⁰⁶ Already in the fifth century, a Pythagorean named Ion of Chios wrote that Pherecydes “even in death has a delightful life for his soul, if indeed Pythagoras was truly wise about all things.”¹⁰⁷ Although open to several interpretations,¹⁰⁸ this passage likely means that Pherecydes had been good in this life and therefore received a delightful afterlife because that is the reward of the good—just as Pythagoras taught. That the soul transmigrates according to the merits or demerits it has achieved in its former life appears to have been the eschatology of the fifth-century Pythagoreans, as well as of Pythagoras himself.

This doctrine surfaces in the work of two fifth-century poets who wrote on Sicily, near enough to the Pythagorean colonies of southern Italy to have been familiar with their doctrines.¹⁰⁹ The first of them was Pindar (518–438). Though not himself a Pythagorean, while on Sicily Pindar wrote an ode for the Olympic victory of Theron of Akragas in 476. This poem, the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid; 117; see also 111 and 118.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 117.

¹⁰² Phi, 214; McEvelley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, 103, also mentions Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.38, as indirect evidence.

¹⁰³ West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ He was said to have written a book that went by the name *Theokrasia*, which may be translated “Divine Mingling” (with Geoffrey S. Kirk et al., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 51), or even “Fusion with God” (with Piet F. M. Fontaine, *The Light and the Dark: A Cultural History of Dualism* (Amsterdam: G. S. Gieben, 1986), 49).

¹⁰⁵ D.L. 8.2.

¹⁰⁶ Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 9.

¹⁰⁷ D.L., 1.120 = DK36B4; trans. McKirahan in Curd, *The Presocratics*, 82.

¹⁰⁸ For a list of them, see Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 52–53.

¹⁰⁹ The two major Pythagorean settlements were Croton and Metapontum. At the beginning of the fifth century, however, Pythagoreans there suffered a political catastrophe in which many of them were murdered. Nevertheless, their intellectual influence in the region likely lingered even after they lost political power.

second Olympian Ode, begins with a reference to Heracles “and maintains the general theme of the hero right through to its mystical passage,”¹¹⁰ in which Pindar elaborates an eschatological myth that includes multiple reincarnations, punishments, and (for those who have kept their oaths) eternal “company with the honored gods.”¹¹¹ In another poem, lost but for a fragment quoted by Plato, Pindar has Persephone reward the souls of the dead according to the atonement they have tendered her in life. Scholarly reconstruction of the myth from later Orphic sources makes the original sin of all humans our creation. Born from the ashes of wicked Titans—whom Zeus had smitten with his thunderbolt after they had eaten Dionysus, his divine son by Persephone—we inherited the mixture of evil and good present in these ashes.¹¹² The aim of Orphic cult would naturally have been the purification of the one from the other. Should we overcome our ancestral debt by this purification, Pindar has Persephone reward us with a better life in our next incarnation.¹¹³

A more elaborate Pythagorean eschatology can be found in the writings of a second poet of the fifth century, Empedocles (ca. 492–432), a resident of Akragas who may even have studied among the Pythagoreans.¹¹⁴ Eulogizing Pythagoras, apparently,¹¹⁵ he called him “a man of immense knowledge, who had obtained the greatest wealth of mind.”¹¹⁶ Indeed, Empedocles added, this man could remember his past incarnations and thus “easily saw each and every thing in ten or twenty generations.”¹¹⁷ Claiming the same clairvoyance for himself, Empedocles said that he had already been a girl, a bush, a bird, and a fish—though perhaps not in that order.¹¹⁸ He imagined a hierarchy of animals and plants in which souls were reincarnated according to their merits. As he told it, the best animal to become was a

¹¹⁰ Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 257.

¹¹¹ Ol. 2.65–66; trans. William H. Race, *Pindar: Olympian Odes, Pythian Odes*. (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 71.

¹¹² Orph. frag. 60–235. For complete citations and discussion, see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 297–98, n. 15. See also Richard S. Bluck, *Plato's Meno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 278–79. For a complete treatment of Pindar's eschatology, see Hugh Lloyd-Jones, “Pindar and the Afterlife,” in *Greek Epic, Lyric, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 80–103.

¹¹³ Plato, *Men.* 81b8–c4. Pindar fr. 133, Snell; William H. Race, *Pindar: Nemean Odes, Isthmian Odes, Fragments* (LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1997), 369.

¹¹⁴ D.L. 8.54–56.

¹¹⁵ There is some controversy about the object of this praise. Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 54–55, makes a good case for Pythagoras.

¹¹⁶ Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 30 = DK31B129; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 161.

¹¹⁷ Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 30 = DK31B129; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 161.

¹¹⁸ Hippolytus, *Haer.*, I iii 2 = DK31B117; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 157. McEvilley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, 107, has noticed that each of the animal species may represent an Empedoclean element: earth (bush), water, (fish), air (bird).

lion; the best plant, a laurel.¹¹⁹ Best of all incarnations was that of a human. Only as a human, presumably, could one act to purify oneself, and assiduous purification would bring the ultimate reward: life beyond the cycle of reincarnation. One of the gradual developments in Indian eschatology described by McEvelley is the replacement of an early version, according to which the soul progresses through all the species randomly (thereby recognizing that *ātman* is *Brahman*—roughly, that soul is cosmos—by dint of longsuffering experience), with a later version that includes early escape for those humans who recognize this by dint of contemplation.¹²⁰ Like the other Pythagoreans who espoused transmigration, Empedocles seems to have described a version of the later sort. Without any extant record of indigenous development, this version seems to have arrived in Greece already formed.

In order to understand Empedocles' own particular adaptation of transmigration we must first explain his dualistic cosmology, which seems to owe more to Persia than to India. Two forces compete for supremacy in his cosmos, Love and Strife, which mix and separate its stuff in alternating cycles.¹²¹ "If we said that Empedocles in a sense both mentions, and is the first to mention, the bad and the good as principles," wrote Aristotle, "we should perhaps be right."¹²² This paradigm of early Greek dualism also epitomizes the philosophical spirit that sought divinization through purification of thought. Empedocles imagined a stage in his cosmic cycle, the stage in which Love dominates, when everything is intermingled and the cosmos forms one giant sphere. This sphere is "merely a mind, holy and unutterable, rushing with rapid thought over the whole world."¹²³ Although the individual soul was originally unified with this intelligent sphere of Love, Strife has separated it, imprisoning it in a body.¹²⁴ Here it is doomed for a certain time to wander the earth—no less than "thrice ten thousand seasons"¹²⁵—preserving a divided allegiance.¹²⁶ While incarcerated and in exile, it may act to promote either the Strife that cursed it or the Love from

¹¹⁹ Aelian, *Nat. an.* XII 7 = DK31B127; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 157.

¹²⁰ McEvelley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, 141–42; cf. Herodotus, 2.123.

¹²¹ For the action of Love and Strife, see the fragments quoted by Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 132–34, namely DK31B16, B35, B86–87, B95, B71, B73, and B75. See also *Metaph.* 985a21–b3.

¹²² *Metaph.* 985a5–9; trans. Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1558.

¹²³ Ammonius, *Int.* 249.1–10 = DK31B134; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 140. On the Empedoclean sphere, see the fragments collected in Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 140–41. For Greek reverence of the sphere, which will arise later in this study, see Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 351–54 (1962) and 351–54 (1965).

¹²⁴ Plutarch, *Exil.* 607CE = DK31B115.6; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 113.

¹²⁵ Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 113.

¹²⁶ Simplicius, *Cael.* 528.30–530.1 = DK31B35; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 133.

which it originally sprang.¹²⁷ “Two fates or spirits take over and govern each of us when we are born.”¹²⁸ We must choose between them.

Not surprisingly, Empedocles enjoins his readers to attend to Love in their thought.¹²⁹ Those who do so, as if recalling the Zoroastrian motto quoted earlier, “think friendly thoughts and perform deeds of peace.”¹³⁰ Such deeds preclude eating meat and having sex. “The bodies of the animals we eat,” he believed, “are the dwelling places of punished souls.”¹³¹ To eat them would therefore be murder, possibly even patricide or matricide.¹³² As for sex, it favors Strife rather than Love, ironically, because it cooperates in the construction of more human bodies in which souls may be imprisoned.¹³³ Pitched between Love and Strife, then, the reincarnated soul participates daily in a cosmic contest. To favor Love is to seek purification—for which reason the practical side of Empedocles’ poetry was known as *Katharmoi*.¹³⁴ These “purifications” are matters not just of action but also of thought. By thinking divine thoughts, the convert to Love imitates the pure thought that reigns when the cosmos is one giant sphere. “Happy is he,” Empedocles thus wrote, “who has gained the wealth of divine thoughts.”¹³⁵

Beyond mortal happiness, Empedocles promised divinization. Those humans who had lived nobly, as “prophets and poets and physicians and political leaders” (incidentally, Empedocles’ own professions), “arise as gods, highest in honour.”¹³⁶ Having lived piously and justly, having fully purified their souls, they escape the cycle of rebirth and possess happiness

¹²⁷ Hippolytus, Haer. 7.29.14–23; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 115.

¹²⁸ Plutarch, Commentary on the Golden Verses 24.2; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 145.

¹²⁹ Simplicius, Phys. 157.25–159.10 = DK31B17.

¹³⁰ Trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 121.

¹³¹ Hippolytus, Haer. 7.29.14–23; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 115.

¹³² Sextus Empiricus, Math. 9.127–29 = DK31B137; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 158.

¹³³ Hippolytus, Haer. 7.29.14–23; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 115.

¹³⁴ One of the most controversial questions of Empedoclean scholarship is whether Empedocles wrote two poems—*Peri Phuseōs* and *Katharmoi*—or one poem that went by these two names. Taking a position on this question is not our concern here, but discussions of it can be found in Brad Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 8–21, favoring one poem, and Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 363–70, favoring two.

¹³⁵ Clement, Strom. 5.14.140.5 = DK31B132; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 117.

¹³⁶ Empedocles was a political leader who prevented a tyranny in Agrigentum (D.L., 8.72). The isolation of certain stations as penultimate stages before immortalization recalls the Upaniṣads’ doctrine that members of the highest caste, the Brahmins, were most likely to escape reincarnation (McEvelley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, 113). Both doctrines anticipate Plato’s belief, which we shall discuss below, that philosophers are the highest mortal stage before the divine.

for eternity, “at the same hearth and table as the other immortals, relieved of mortal pains, tireless.”¹³⁷ By several accounts, Empedocles may have symbolized his own such purification and divinization by casting himself into Mount Etna. Examining this peculiar story, which has generated ridicule since antiquity,¹³⁸ Kingsley has decoded its complex synthesis of Pythagorean eschatology and magic. The volcano, for example, offered both the ritual significance of purification by fire and a gateway to both the fiery underworld below and the fiery heavens above.¹³⁹ Empedocles anticipated his purifying death by claiming escape from the cycles of reincarnation even while he lived: “I go about you an immortal god, no longer mortal.”¹⁴⁰

His Pythagorean eschatology thus reproduced the tripartite structure of the Indian doctrine—*metempsychōsis* upon death, *katharsis* in increasingly noble human lives, and *lisis* after one’s final incarnation as a prophet, poet, physician, or political leader. As such, it marked a sharp departure from the eschatology of the Homeric epics. For example, the Homeric soul (or “shade,” *psychē*) emerges as something distinct only after death, never entering another body, persisting only as something insubstantial and miserable in Hades.¹⁴¹ Achilles would famously rather “slave on earth for another man—some dirt-poor tenant farmer who scrapes to keep alive—than rule down here over all the breathless dead.”¹⁴² Inverting Achilles’ lament, then, the Pythagoreans preferred to this life another—whether it was the chance to purify oneself further in another bodily existence or an escape from mortal bodies altogether. It thus appears odd, at first, that Pythagoreans often practiced medicine,¹⁴³ the art that aims to make our time in

¹³⁷ Clement, Strom. V xiv 122.3 = DK31B147; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 157.

¹³⁸ D.L. 8.69. For other references, see Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 233.

¹³⁹ For Greek purification by fire, see Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 252. For the volcano as a gateway to both the fiery underworld below and the fiery heavens above, see Kingsley, 50–53. Still more bizarre than the volcano was the shoe it was said to spew forth after Empedocles dove into its crater. “This one bronze sandal,” writes Kingsley, “was the chief ‘sign’ or ‘symbol’ of Hecate who, as the ‘controller of Tartarus’ and mediator between this world and the next, grants the magician access to the underworld” (Kingsley, 238, citing the work of A. Dietrich).

¹⁴⁰ D.L., 8.62 = DK31B112.

¹⁴¹ For Homer’s portrait of the soul’s life after death, see Od. 11, otherwise known as the *Nekyia*, or Book of the Dead. Helpful commentaries on Homeric psychology and eschatology include B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), David B. Claus, *Toward the Soul* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1981), and Jan Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). The best and most recent of these commentaries is Brooke Holmes, *The Symptom and the Subject: The Emergence of the Physical Body in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹⁴² Odyssey 11.489–491; trans. R. Fagles, *The Odyssey* (New York: Viking, 1996), 265.

¹⁴³ The most famous of the early philosopher-physicians were Philolaus and Alcmaeon, both of Croton, as well as Empedocles. All were associated with the Pythagoreans. But the fusion of

mortal bodies both longer and more comfortable. Empedocles, for instance, promised to teach “all the potions which there are as a defence against evils and old age.”¹⁴⁴ Yet also, he wrote, “you shall bring from Hades the strength of a man who has died.”¹⁴⁵ Mastery over old age was a part of his mastery over death, it would seem, and both threatened Homeric religion, which reserved true immortality for the gods.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, immortality was for traditional Greek religion synonymous with divinity.¹⁴⁷ Not even heroes were permitted more than the persistence of their name on earth and their shade in Hades. No heroes, that is, except Heracles and Dionysus.¹⁴⁸

Their apotheoses helped humans imagine the same for themselves, and so it is not surprising that “the idea of imitating or identifying with Dionysus in later times often tended to go hand in hand with the idea of imitating Heracles.”¹⁴⁹ For his part, Heracles earned a seat on Olympus for his extraordinary deeds, or “labors,” and thus became, as Burkert writes, “a model for the common man who may hope that after a life of drudgery, and through that very life, he too may enter into the company of the gods.”¹⁵⁰ Empedocles seemed to realize this hope, since three of his purported deeds recapitulated Heracles’ labors: diversion of a river for the sake of cleansing,¹⁵¹ retrieval of someone’s soul from the underworld,¹⁵² and immortalization through fire.¹⁵³ Heracles had a traditional place in Greek mythology; Empedocles and the other Pythagoreans were newcomers. The arrival of these philosophical “heroes” thus challenged old precepts: “Nothing in excess,” declared the temple of Delphi; “do not, my soul, strive for the life

medicine and philosophy was not unique to Pythagoreans. Democritus was said to have written medical works, and some Hippocratic treatises dealt in places with philosophical topics (e.g. *Morb. sacr.*, *Nat. hom.*, and *Vet. med.*). In the Roman era, Sextus Empiricus and Galen were both physicians and philosophers. The latter even wrote a treatise entitled *The Best Doctor is Also a Philosopher*.

¹⁴⁴ D.L. 8.59 = DK 31B111; trans. B. Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 219.

¹⁴⁵ Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, 219.

¹⁴⁶ See II. 4.320–21, 9.445–446, Od. 13.59–60; cited and discussed by Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 222.

¹⁴⁷ See Pádraig O’Cleirigh and Rex Barrell, *An Introduction to Greek Mythology* (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 50–53, for the equation of immortality and divinity, as well as other unique features of the traditional Greek notion of *theos*. See also Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 222–23.

¹⁴⁸ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 203–15, especially 205. For an opposing view of Dionysus, see Karl Kerényi, *Dionysos: Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹⁴⁹ Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 269.

¹⁵⁰ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 211.

¹⁵¹ Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 274.

¹⁵² Kingsley, 225–226.

¹⁵³ Kingsley, 253.

of the immortals,” wrote Pindar.¹⁵⁴ A mortal could never expect to imitate Heracles’ super-human accomplishments, but could perhaps wish for his retrieval of the soul from Hades, just as he was supposed to have retrieved Alcestis.¹⁵⁵ Consequently, “Pythagoreans are presented as practicing the ‘imitation of Heracles’ from the very beginning of Pythagoreanism in the West.”¹⁵⁶ Heracles died on a funeral pyre and then, purified, entered the company of the gods. Empedocles’ immortal leap into Etna was not expected of the Pythagoreans,¹⁵⁷ but by joining their company, or at least by beginning their ascetic preparation for pure thought, an initiate could strive less dramatically for the life of the immortals.

The cult of Dionysus encouraged similar hope, promising immortality and even divinity to its initiates. From burial sites throughout the Greek-speaking world, including southern Italy, archaeologists have exhumed gold plates that read “from a man becoming a god” and, more mysteriously, “I am a kid who has rushed for the milk.”¹⁵⁸ As Kingsley has observed, young goats were associated with Dionysus, “specifically in the context of suckling milk.”¹⁵⁹ Moreover, this allusion was preceded by another: “I have made straight for the breast of Her Mistress, queen of the underworld.” This queen was Persephone, and the coincidence of her with Dionysus in an eschatological context evokes Orphic mythology.¹⁶⁰ Before the initiate could rush for the milk of the underworld, Bacchic festivals in this life were means of purification and divinization, making votary and god one.¹⁶¹ “Les danses, les courses folles, les errances, les transports,” writes Moulinier, “qui sont le fait d’une âme possédée par le dieu la délivrent et la purifient.”¹⁶² Perhaps it is not so surprising, then, to learn that a work called *Bacchae* has been attributed to Philolaus or that Archytas the Pythagorean “refers in his writings to details from Dionysiac ritual.”¹⁶³

Nor were the Bacchic festivals and the Pythagorean societies the only alternatives available to fifth-century Greeks seeking intimacy with the di-

¹⁵⁴ Pyth. 3.61; trans. Race, *Pindar*, 251. “Do not seek to become Zeus,” he wrote in Isthm. 5.14; trans. Race 1997b, 177. See also Euripides, Alc. 799 and Epicharmus B20, quoted by Aristotle at Rhet. 1394b25.

¹⁵⁵ Alc. 1072–1158

¹⁵⁶ Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 276.

¹⁵⁷ Kingsley, 253.

¹⁵⁸ Kingsley, 264. For other discussions, see Fritz Graf, “Dionysian and Orphic Eschatology: New Texts and Old Questions,” in *Masks of Dionysus*, ed. Thomas H. Carpenter and Christopher A. Faraone (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), 239–58, and Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 293.

¹⁵⁹ Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 266.

¹⁶⁰ Supra note 112.

¹⁶¹ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 162.

¹⁶² Moulinier, *Le pur et l’impur dans la pensée des Grecs*, 117.

¹⁶³ Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 262.

vine. The Eleusinian mysteries seem to have made similar promises.¹⁶⁴ So too did the Orphics, who are difficult to distinguish, in some ways, from the Pythagoreans; in other ways, from the worshipers of Dionysus.¹⁶⁵ In Euripides' *Hippolytus* (429), for instance, Theseus scorns his son's newfangled Orphic piety with words that reveal four features at odds with the Homeric religion represented by the traditional hero: immortality, chastity, dietary restrictions, and literacy. "So you're a companion of the gods," Theseus spits sarcastically, "someone special?" First of all, the initiates of the cults claimed the company of the gods: immortality at least, if not also unity with the divine. Secondly, chastity was one way that they distinguished themselves from others, a means of purification. "So you're chaste," adds Theseus, "and pure of evil?" Hippolytus advertises his sexual purity in the portentous words of his opening speech.¹⁶⁶ Another means of purification was dietary restriction, especially vegetarianism. "Peddle your vegetables," concludes Theseus, "and revere the smoke of your voluminous books."¹⁶⁷ The Orphics seem to have been readers as well as vegetarians.¹⁶⁸ Central to Homeric religion, by contrast, were animal sacrifice and ordered public festivals that preserved the oral tradition of bards.

"The characteristic appeal to books is indicative of a revolution," observes Burkert; "the new form of transmission introduces a new form of authority to which the individual, provided that he can read, has direct access without collective mediation."¹⁶⁹ This revolution made Orphic religion and Pythagorean philosophy indistinguishable—to us, but also to ancient writers of the period. For example, Ion of Chios said that "Pythagoras composed some things and attributed them to Orpheus."¹⁷⁰ Herodotus wrote that the prohibition against burial in woolen clothing "accords with the Orphic and Bacchic rites, as they are called (though they are actually Egyptian and Pythagorean)."¹⁷¹ Ion's claim argues an assimilation of Pythagoreanism and Orphism; Herodotus's a conflation of both with the cult of

¹⁶⁴ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 289, cites three sources: Hymn to Demeter 280–82, Pindar fr. 137a, and Sophocles fr. 837 (Pearson-Radt).

¹⁶⁵ Graf, "Dionysian and Orphic Eschatology," 239–40.

¹⁶⁶ 73–107, especially 102.

¹⁶⁷ 948–954; trans. PLM.

¹⁶⁸ Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1032–33) mentions Orpheus in connection with mystic rites and abstinence from slaughter. Plato mentions "a noisy throng of books by Musaeus and Orpheus" (Resp. 2.364e3).

¹⁶⁹ Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 297. The touchstone for this point is the coincidence of the Gutenberg bible and the Protestant Reformation.

¹⁷⁰ D.L., 8.8; trans. Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 29.

¹⁷¹ Herodotus, 2.81; trans. R. Waterfield, *Herodotus: The Histories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 126.

Dionysus.¹⁷² That even contemporaneous authors could confuse them offers some consolation to the frustrated scholar.¹⁷³ More importantly, it reveals the similarity of Pythagorean philosophy to the doctrines of contemporaneous salvation cults.¹⁷⁴ No such confusion was made with the other philosophical movements of the period, nor was such a confusion possible. The novelty of Pythagorean *philosophy* lay in its blend with religion.¹⁷⁵ “Every distinction they lay down as to what should be done or not done,” observed Aristoxenus, “aims at communion with the divine.”¹⁷⁶

Conversely, the novelty of Pythagorean *religion* lay in its blend with philosophy. Even though the Pythagoreans shared their ultimate goal with the salvation cults, their route to this goal seems to have been quite different. Whereas Eleusis promised immortality to those who had been initiated and had seen the holy objects, and whereas the Bacchics tasted unity with the divine in the midst of their revels, the Pythagoreans—and perhaps also the Orphics—favored small congregations whose asceticism was aimed at a purification of thought. Although the Zoroastrians also made the purification of thought one aim of their rituals and taboos, asceticism was foreign to them. If ascetic practices such as chastity,¹⁷⁷ vegetarianism,¹⁷⁸ and the apparently related prohibition of bean-eating¹⁷⁹ were imported, they must be traced to another source. Since the doctrine of transmigration seems to stand behind them, at least in the case of Empedocles, they likely had the

¹⁷² About the Egyptians, it must be said, Herodotus seems to be mistaken. Whether or not they were debarred from burial in wool, “current knowledge indicates that the Egyptians were not familiar with the doctrine of rebirth” (Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 56). For a more sympathetic reading, see Burkert, *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis*, 98.

¹⁷³ With an apt metaphor from geometry, Burkert describes them as three intersecting circles (*Greek Religion*, 300). See also Cornford, “Mysticism and Science in the Pythagorean Tradition,” 143, and Kahn, “Pythagorean Philosophy Before Plato,” 20–22.

¹⁷⁴ Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 262–72, discusses the complicated relationship between them.

¹⁷⁵ And specifically the religion of the salvation cults, although Pythagoreans did not ignore the traditional gods. It was said that Pythagoras not only paid due deference to the traditional gods, but even that he was a descendant of Apollo (Isocrates, *Bus.* 28–29; trans. Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 31). See Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 203.

¹⁷⁶ Iamblichus *Vit. Pyth.*, 137 = DK45D2; trans. Cornford, “Mysticism and Science in the Pythagorean Tradition,” 142.

¹⁷⁷ Although Empedocles preached chastity, Pythagoras was said to be married (D.L. 8.42). If nothing else, the claim about Pythagoras’s marriage indicates that later Pythagoreans were not celibate.

¹⁷⁸ Although Empedocles preached vegetarianism, Burkert has argued that early Pythagoreans tailored their dietary restrictions in order not to conflict with civic religion and its public sacrifices (Kahn, “Pythagorean Philosophy Before Plato.” There was debate in late antiquity about the origins and meanings of Pythagorean food taboos (e.g., D.L. 8.12–13).

¹⁷⁹ For other, still odder, prohibitions, see D.L., 8.17–20, and Iamblichus *Vit. Pyth.* 28.81–87. For a summary and discussion of Pythagorean dietary rules, see Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 67–71. See also Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 283–85.

same provenance—namely, India. Even if these particular ascetic practices are traced outside the Greek world, the ascetic impulse is nonetheless at home in the Pythagoreans' adapted variety of dualism. After all, asceticism is self-restraint, or self-limitation, and Pythagoreans venerated limit over against the unlimited. Cosmology thus matched ethical practice; dualism warranted a way of life.

Alongside limit went harmony, moreover, whether of lyre strings or the music of the spheres. Musical and astronomical study were thus further means by which Pythagoreans sought to align themselves with the good over against the evil. Ascetic restraint purified the body while inquiry purified the soul. Each imposed limit on the unlimited, but the soul's study of the cosmos, in particular, assimilated the one to the other. The correspondence between cosmos and soul "very likely goes back in some sense and to some degree to Bronze Age Mesopotamia where the trail of the macrocosm/microcosm correspondence leads."¹⁸⁰ The Milesians take it for granted. Anaximenes, for instance, asserted that an infinite air ordered the cosmos just as breath orders our body.¹⁸¹ He also believed that the soul shares in the divinity of the cosmos itself, since "air is a god."¹⁸² Although Philolaus did not divinize air, he did write that the cosmos "drew in from the unlimited time, breath, and void which in each case distinguishes the place of each thing."¹⁸³ As vatic as this doctrine appears, the idea seems to be that time, breath, and void are unlimited continua—like lyre strings—which, when limited by the imposition of boundaries from without, become quantities. No extant fragment connects this doctrine with the breath of the human body, yet one does say that we resemble the quantified cosmos by virtue of our mathematical reason. For "mathematical reason," wrote Philolaus, "inasmuch as it considers the nature of the universe, has a certain affinity to it (for like is naturally apprehended by like)."¹⁸⁴ In other words,

¹⁸⁰ McEvelley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, 101.

¹⁸¹ That Anaximenes posited infinite (or "limitless") air is testified by Hippolytus and Olympiodorus. See Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 24, 26. The Pythagoreans adopted something like this view, believing that the world inhales the infinite fiery-air (*pneuma*) that surrounds it (Phys. 213b22–26). Huffman, "Philolaus," 2.1, also discusses Fr. 201, which describes the universe as drawing in time, breath, and void from the unlimited. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (1962), 469–73, sees echoes of this view in Heraclitus, calling it "a common notion of the universe" shared by most of the Presocratics.

¹⁸² Cicero, Nat. d. 1.10.26 = DK13A10. Before Anaximenes, Thales had thought that "everything was full of gods" (De an., 411a7–8; trans. Barnes 2001, 12).

¹⁸³ Aristotle, Fr. 201 = DK44B17; trans. Huffman 1993, 43.

¹⁸⁴ Sextus Empiricus, Math. 7.92; trans. Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 178. For Empedocles' similar "like-to-like" theory of thinking, see 31B107 (Theophrastus, Sens. 10); for his "like-to-like" theory of nutrition, see 31B90. Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic*, 298, argues that this theory had special significance for Empedocles; in any case, the theory of

our mathematical abilities show an affinity between our soul and the divine cosmos. By practicing mathematics in addition to self-restraint, it thus seems, the Pythagoreans sought to develop and augment this affinity.¹⁸⁵

They thereby fomented a revolution that was simultaneously religious and philosophical. In philosophy, they justified a peculiar way of life. In religion, they disregarded the indigenous precept to think mortal thoughts and instead enjoined their initiates to become divine through pure thought of the divine.¹⁸⁶ This revolutionary quest for pure thought seems to have synthesized the contributions of several older traditions of philosophy and religion. From Miletus—and still further, from Babylon—they seem to have inherited their mathematics and astronomy; from India, their tripartite eschatology. And yet the cosmologies of these traditions were equally monistic: the Milesians sought one *archē*, as we have seen; the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, for instance, declared of *Brahman*: “as a unity only is It to be looked upon.”¹⁸⁷ With diversity an illusion, and unity their only reality, the Milesians and the Upaniṣads were equally preoccupied with the so-called problem of the one and the many.¹⁸⁸ If Pythagoreans were less concerned with this problem, it may have been because they integrated elements of these monistic traditions into a dualistic cosmology adapted from Persia. Conceptually unstable as it may have been, this synthesis and the program

perception according to which “like is naturally apprehended by like” may date back to Pythagoras himself (Aëtius, 4.13.9–10 [Dox. gr. 404] = DK28A48).

¹⁸⁵ Many scholars believe that this fusion of religion and mathematics was not likely a feature of early Pythagoreanism. “It is universally recognized,” writes Fritz Graf in the Oxford Classical Dictionary, “that scientific Pythagoreanism is a reform of its earlier, religious way ascribed to Hippasus of Metapontum around 450 B.C.” (1284). One prominent dissenter from this “universal” consensus is Kahn, 37–38.

¹⁸⁶ Not all Pythagoreans would maintain both aspects of this revolution. Sometime in the fifth century, according to later testimonies, a schism arose within their society (Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 81,82 = DK18,2, 58C4; for a fuller account of the differences, see Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (1962), 191–93, McKirahan, *Philosophy Before Socrates*, 89–93, and Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, 106–8). On one hand, those calling themselves *akousmatikoi* dogmatically preserved the moral and religious sayings, or *akousmata*, attributed to Pythagoras himself. (The Greek verb *akouein* means “to hear,” so that an *akousma* means “something heard,” and *akousmata* is its plural form. An *akousmatikos* is thus someone eager to hear something, and *akousmatikoi* its plural form.) Those calling themselves *mathēmatikoi*, on the other hand, continued in the spirit of innovation and learning, or *mathēma*, they attributed to the founder. Although the *mathēmatikoi* accepted the legitimacy of their rivals, the *akousmatikoi* did not extend to theirs the same generosity. So long as the original synthesis of religion and philosophy persisted, however, the Pythagoreans urged more vigilant care of one’s soul, and especially of one’s thought, in ways that refashioned both fields.

¹⁸⁷ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.20; trans. Robert E. Hume, in Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 88.

¹⁸⁸ See, e.g., *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.7, 3.2.7–8; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.10.1, 8.7.4; *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.3.1; *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.9.

of purification it enjoined—according to which the soul, and especially its reason, was to eschew the body, and through repeated incarnations decide for limit against the unlimited, good against evil, light against darkness—would promise union with the divine, and eventually achieve the allegiance of the most influential of Greek philosophers, Plato.¹⁸⁹

Plato's Pythagoreanism

After Socrates' trial and execution, Plato visited Philolaus and other Pythagoreans in Italy—at least according to Diogenes Laertius.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, Diogenes relates several letters between Plato and the famous Pythagorean, Archytas.¹⁹¹ The *Seventh Letter* confirms this intimacy, if indeed it is by Plato.¹⁹² His heavy debt to their doctrines may therefore be traceable to a direct exposure. However Plato became acquainted with Pythagorean doctrines, though, they became integral to several of his most famous dialogues. In *Meno*, for example, the discussion turns to mathematics,¹⁹³ and not just to mathematics, but to a special case of the Pythagorean theorem.¹⁹⁴ Socrates interrogates a slave who without any previous education in geometry seems to learn the true dimensions of an eight-foot square, overcoming his prejudice that these dimensions were simply double those of a four-foot one. Socrates' questions have been instrumental in his success: first they expose the contradiction of his false claim to knowledge, and then eventually they lead him to recognize the correct answer.

Naturally it seems to us that the slave has *learned* and that Socrates has been his teacher. But our prejudices about knowledge prove no less mistaken than the slave's about mathematics. He cannot have learned the dimensions of the square, it turns out, since learning has been precluded by the so-called Meno paradox: we can never find what we seek to know unless we already know what we seek, otherwise we would seek in vain, never recognizing our object even were we to find it. Whether someone knows something or not, he cannot learn it: "he cannot search for what he knows—since he knows it, there is no need to search—nor for what he does not know, for

¹⁸⁹ Monism remained the dominant trend in Greek philosophy. Although apparently influenced by Pythagoreanism, the Eleatics (Parmenides, Zeno, and Melissus) would reject their dualism, proposing a most radical monism. Anaxagoras would exalt mind (*nous*) as a cosmic force, but would describe it as a type of pure matter. The Atomists (Leucippus and Democritus) populated their cosmos with nothing but atoms and void, predisposing Epicurus and his followers likewise to materialist monism. The Stoics would dispute many Epicurean views, but materialism was one tenet they shared. On all such matters, characteristically, the Sceptics suspended judgment.

¹⁹⁰ D.L. 3.6.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 8.79–81.

¹⁹² Ep. 338c6; see Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (1962), 333–36.

¹⁹³ Men. 82b–86c.

¹⁹⁴ Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans*, 54.

he does not know what to look for.”¹⁹⁵ And yet, if learning is impossible, how has the slave deduced the dimensions of the eight-foot square? By itself, Socrates’ interrogation cannot have taught him mathematical truth, nor truth of any other sort; it serves only to expose inconsistencies. But with help from it as a mnemonic device—that is to say, with a number of leading questions that begin to look suspiciously like instruction—anyone can re-collect knowledge already possessed but forgotten.¹⁹⁶ The slave has not *learned* the square’s dimensions; he has *recollected* them.¹⁹⁷ As his lifelong master attests, the slave has never been educated in mathematics. He could not have acquired his knowledge in this life. He must therefore have acquired it earlier.¹⁹⁸

In *Meno*, Plato has Socrates introduce this epistemic solution upon the authority of unnamed priests and priestesses and also, significantly, by invoking Pindar. In fact, Socrates quotes the very fragment of Pindar’s poetry we examined when we discussed Pythagorean eschatology.¹⁹⁹ “As the soul is immortal, has been born often and has seen all things here and in the underworld,” Socrates concludes, “there is nothing which it has not yet learned.”²⁰⁰ Having learned everything in his past lives, he adds, “nothing prevents a man after recalling one thing only—a process men call learning—discovering everything else for himself.”²⁰¹ But a crucial point has been ignored. The *Meno* paradox should have rendered learning in former lives as impossible as it is in this one. Indeed, an infinite number of incarna-

¹⁹⁵ Men. 80e3–5.

¹⁹⁶ Socrates uses interrogative particles that suggest the correct answers—whether yes or no—to the slave. In the Greek, especially *oukoun* (83b3, e5; 85a1), but also in their contexts *ouchi* (83c3, 4; 85a5), *ē ou* (83d1), and *ouch* (83d2) suggest a positive answer, while *oud’ ar’* suggests a negative. In English these particles are rendered by Grube (cf. Cooper, *Plato*, 151–57) respectively as “is it not?” (suggested answer: “it is”) and “it cannot be, can it?” (suggested answer: “it cannot”).

¹⁹⁷ Conveniently, Socrates never notices that a parallel paradox of recollection arises alongside Meno’s paradox of learning. After all, if memory is like an aviary, as Plato imagines in *Theaetetus* (197b–199c), and recollection is akin to seeking and finding within it a particular bird, then recollection should require that we already know what we seek. We cannot find a particular bird unless we already know what it looks like. When the object of our search is knowledge, however, knowing what we seek is already to possess it. Recollection therefore appears as impossible as learning. As Aristotle will later observe, neither are in fact impossible because both can proceed with only partial knowledge, whereas Meno’s paradox assumes that they need total knowledge. Thus, for example, when I seek a particular bird in an aviary, I must know some things about it (e.g., what it looks like) but need not know others (e.g., where it is). “What is absurd,” observed Aristotle, “is not that you should know in some sense what you are learning, but that you should know it in this sense, i.e., in the way and sense in which you are learning it” (*Post. an.* 71b7–9).

¹⁹⁸ The most succinct statement of this argument can be found in *Phaed.* 72e2–73b2, a fuller version follows this, 73b3–77a5.

¹⁹⁹ *Supra* note 113.

²⁰⁰ Men. 81c5–d5; trans. Grube, in Cooper, 880.

²⁰¹ Trans. Grube, in Cooper, 880.

tions should have added nothing to the wisdom of a soul doomed to seek either what it knows and cannot learn, or what it does not know and cannot find. As if to answer this objection, Plato in *Phaedrus* embellishes his eschatological epistemology by imagining a pure soul, unencumbered by a body, moving in a divine realm where it perceives directly “what is truly real.”²⁰² The Meno paradox required of learning a search; direct perception obviates it. Denied this direct perception while still embodied here below, we must labor in indirect perception, using sensible things for “recollection of the things our soul saw when it was traveling with god.”²⁰³

According to the myth of this dialogue, before its conjunction with a body each human soul at least glimpsed what is truly real, whether true beauty or the true form of anything else known by us. Indeed, our souls’ glimpses of these forms distinguish them from the souls currently inhabiting the bodies of animals. Never having directly perceived forms, these souls cannot recollect them and are for now doomed to ignorance.²⁰⁴ Conversely, our direct perception has permitted us knowledge, even if not every human soul was in the best possible condition when it perceived true reality. Our levels of knowledge vary as a result of these conditions. Confidently including himself among those—the philosophical souls—who were in the best possible condition, Socrates says of true reality, “we saw it in pure light because we were pure ourselves.”²⁰⁵ Plato thus treats philosophy as a cult that purifies its devotees for “that blessed and spectacular vision...the mystery that we may rightly call the most blessed of all.”²⁰⁶ By philosophizing, therefore, we become perfect enough to perceive directly the true forms, the “sacred revealed objects that were perfect, and simple, and unshakeable and blissful.”²⁰⁷ Unmistakable here is the language of mystery cults such as that of Eleusis. Throughout the dialogue, in fact, we find the language of religious rites such as Bacchic frenzy.²⁰⁸ The account of *philosophy* as purification, however, recalls the more intellectual tradition of Pythagoreanism.

This Platonic debt to the Pythagoreans emerges still clearer from *Phaedo*. Besides the dramatic hints of Pythagoreanism already mentioned, in this dialogue we find music and mathematics featured prominently among the

²⁰² *Phaedr.* 249c3–4; in Cooper, 527.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* 249c1–3; in Cooper, 527.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 249b5–c1; in Cooper, 527.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 250c4–5; in Cooper, 528.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 250b8–c1; in Cooper, 528.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 250c1–6; in Cooper, 528.

²⁰⁸ Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, *Phaedrus* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1995), 3, n. 8, provide a comprehensive list: “234d (Bacchic frenzy), 241e (possession by Nymphs), 244b and 248d–e (ecstasy of the oracles), 245a and 262d (possession by the Muses), and 250b–d (the ultimate vision after initiation into a cult).”

philosophical examples. Simmias, for instance, suggests that “the soul is a kind of harmony,” a harmony of the body’s elements.²⁰⁹ If so, it cannot be immortal, since it disappears once the body decays and its elements become discordant. Socrates rejects this hypothesis because it is incompatible with the epistemology of recollection. After all, if recollection is to occur, as in the case of Meno’s slave, the soul must have existed before the body. But musical harmony cannot exist before its instrument; neither, then, could the soul if it were a harmony of the body.²¹⁰ Recollection is not simply taken for granted in *Phaedo*. Plato has Socrates defend it as vigorously here as he did in *Meno*, and his argument once again exploits a mathematical concept: equality.²¹¹

We reason about equality, and speak of it, even though our bodily senses perceive no such thing. Although they do perceive many things we judge to be equal, these are equal only in some respects, at some times, or from some perspectives, whereas equality cannot be unequal in any way. Consequently, we cannot have acquired our knowledge of it by perception of the many equal things. None of them is sufficiently equal to be the standard of equality to which we appeal when we judge two things equal. We must, therefore, have had previous access to something without any mixture of inequality, something *purely* equal. This was none other than the Equal itself. Yet “our present argument is no more about the Equal,” adds Socrates, “than about the Beautiful itself, the Good itself, the Just, the Pious and, as I say, about all those things to which we can attach the word ‘itself.’”²¹²

Of all these “Forms”—as they have come to be known,²¹³ thanks to Cicero’s translation (*forma*) into Latin—Plato describes Beauty in most detail. The dialogue devoted to it is *Symposium*; as in *Phaedrus*, the language is that of sacred rites. In his capacity as mystagogue, *Erōs* leads us to Beauty,

²⁰⁹ *Phaed.* 86c2–3; trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 75.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.* 92a6–c3.

²¹¹ For the defense of recollection, see *Phaed.* 72e2–77a5. For the discussion of equality in particular, see 74a9–75d5.

²¹² *Phaed.* 75c10–d2; trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 66. The Greek being translated by “itself” is the idiosyncratic *auto ho esti*, which can be translated more literally by “itself what it is.” Plato gives three Greek names to these things themselves: *eidos*, *idea*, and *genos*. In *Parmenides*, e.g., Plato uses all three: *eidos* (129a1), *idea* (132c4), *genos* (134b7). (Full descriptions of *eidos* and *genos* can be found in Peters (1967), 46–51, 72.) Plato uses these names interchangeably, although he favors the first two, which are forms of the Greek verb *eidō*, “to see” or “to know.” These etymological connections will prove important for our purposes, since the analogy between seeing and knowledge, light and truth, has already been forged at the level of language. We should also note that the most common English translations of these Greek terms are “Form” and “Idea,” each of which preserves the notion of something seen or known.

²¹³ See, e.g., Cicero’s *Top.* 4.14. *Forma* is Latin for beauty.

“the final and highest mystery.”²¹⁴ Plato informs us that “it always *is* and neither comes to be nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes.”²¹⁵ Such a description recalled Parmenides, who had argued that being is one, ungenerated, and imperishable, “nor was it ever, nor will it be, since it is now, all together, one, continuous.”²¹⁶ Indeed, Plato’s description removes Beauty from the sensible world described by Heraclitus—where opposites blend together, and the only stability is change.²¹⁷ Beauty, writes Plato, is thus not “beautiful this way and ugly that way, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in relation to one thing and ugly in relation to another.”²¹⁸ Like Equality and all the other Forms, it cannot be perceived by the senses. Similar to them, in sum, it is “absolute, pure, unmixed, not polluted by human flesh or colors or any other great nonsense of mortality.”²¹⁹

The terms of this description of a Form match those attributed in *Phaedrus* to the sacred revealed objects. Each was said there to be perfect, and simple, and unshakeable and blissful,²²⁰ as we have seen, but also “without color and without shape and without solidity, a being that really is what it is, the subject of all true knowledge.”²²¹ If there is to be any stability in the cosmos, especially in our knowledge of it, then there must be these Forms.²²² They must be purely what they are, without mixture of anything else, without becoming anything else, without any of the movement, color, shape, solidity, or “pollution” from the “nonsense” of the changing material world. By thus separating Forms from matter—the one stable and pure, the other changing and mixed—Plato draws an even starker cosmological distinction than did his Pythagorean predecessors. Even if, like them, he adopted the three notions of purity already found in Greek religion (“l’absence de souillure,” “une absence de mélange,” and “ordre et harmonie”), he nonetheless transposed each to a higher register.²²³ Whereas they found purity in certain edible foods, audible harmonies, and visible stars, Plato reserved it for the imperceptible Forms. Only among them could his initiates escape pollution.

²¹⁴ Symp. 210a1; trans. Nehamas and Woodruff, in Cooper, *Plato*, 493.

²¹⁵ Ibid. 211a1–2; trans. Nehamas and Woodruff, in Cooper, *Plato*, 493.

²¹⁶ Simplicius, Phys. 145.1–146.25 = DK28B8.5–6; slightly rev. Curd, trans. McKirahan, in Curd, *The Presocratics*, 47. See also DK28B8.3–4, and 8.42–43.

²¹⁷ See fragments 50–83 in Curd, *The Presocratics*, 35–38, and especially DK22B88, and B126.

²¹⁸ Symp. 211a2–4; trans. Nehamas and Woodruff, in Cooper, *Plato*, 493.

²¹⁹ Symp. 211e1–3; trans. Nehamas and Woodruff, in Cooper, *Plato*, 494.

²²⁰ Supra note 207.

²²¹ Phaedr. 247c6–7; trans. Nehamas and Woodruff, in Cooper, *Plato*, 525.

²²² See Parm. 130e5–131a2, 132a1–4.

²²³ Mouliniér, *Le pur et l’impur dans la pensée des Grecs*, 426, 428.

Pollution, impurity, or dirt, according to Mary Douglas, is always some sort of disorder.²²⁴ “There is no such thing as dirt,” she writes, “no single item is dirty apart from a particular system of classification in which it does not fit.”²²⁵ Impurity is thus disorder, and “disorder by implication is unlimited, no pattern has been realized in it, but its potential for patterning is indefinite.”²²⁶ Order, by contrast, is definite and limited. Whenever something is put into order, she writes, “from all possible materials a limited selection has been made and from all possible relations a limited set has been used.”²²⁷ Purification should thus be a matter of limiting the unlimited, defining the indefinite, ordering the disordered.²²⁸ Although Douglas focuses her attention on the Jews and Brahmins,²²⁹ no group could better epitomize her theory than the Pythagoreans, for whom the cosmological dualism of unlimited and limit serves as the perfect matrix in which the soul seeks purity. Seeking this purity always, no individual could more nearly epitomize Douglas’s theory than the Socrates of *Phaedo*.

In antiquity this dialogue acquired the appropriate subtitle *On the Soul*. Just before Socrates is to die—a fact that heightens the pathos of the discussion—Plato has him argue that the soul is immortal. Destruction, he claims, is nothing but the dissolution of a composite into its parts. The soul cannot be destroyed, therefore, because it is an undivided unity, a partless simple. It must be so, in fact, since it is like “the things that always remain the same and in the same state,”²³⁰ namely, the Forms. Only among them does the soul feel at home; once with them “it ceases to stray and remains in the same state as it is in touch with things of the same kind.”²³¹ These things are invisible, of course, and thus “can only be grasped by the reasoning power of the mind.”²³² However, this reasoning power cannot be a separate part of the soul, because the soul must remain simple in order to be indestructible and immortal. In *Phaedo*, then, the soul seems to be identified with reason. Its purification thus becomes a matter of reasoning, a contemplation of rational order, the Forms by themselves.

“When the soul investigates by itself,” Plato writes, “it passes into the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging, and being

²²⁴ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 44, 50.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, xvii.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 117.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5, 7.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 42, 64.

²³⁰ *Phaed.* 78c6–8; trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 69. See also 78c10–d7.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 79d1–7; trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 70.

²³² *Ibid.*, 79a3–4; trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 70.

akin to this, it always stays with it whenever it is by itself and can do so.”²³³ The Forms are pure, as we have seen, because they have the properties of which they are Forms, and never their contradictories; they do not change according to respects, places, or perspectives; they are “by themselves,” as Plato defines them.²³⁴ The soul, by comparison, is impure to the extent that it is not “by itself,” but mixed with something that is not a soul, the body. It becomes pure, or more nearly so, when it “investigates by itself”—in other words, when it forswears the body and its motions, separating itself from the body’s realm of mixture and impurity. As in Pythagoreanism and the mystery cults alike, so too in Plato: “it is not permitted to the impure to attain the pure.”²³⁵ In order to think of pure Forms, then, the soul must transcend the body, and this transcendence is the first stage of its purification. Citing the “language of the mysteries” and also recalling Philolaus,²³⁶ Plato deems the body a prison, not to mention an evil infection, an inebriating contamination, and a source of discord.²³⁷ As matter, it is “most like that which is human, mortal, multi-form, unintelligible, soluble, and never consistently the same.” The soul, by contrast, is “most like the divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, always the same as itself.”²³⁸ The soul, in other words, already resembles the pure Forms. By thinking of them purely, additionally, the soul abandons the illusions of changing things presented to it by the senses and focuses instead on the unchanging Being accessible to its reason.

Phaedo is thus the *locus classicus* of both soul-body dualism and the Pythagorean effort to purify the one of the other. (*Katharsis* and its cognates, in fact, occur thirty-three times in the dialogue—more than once for every two pages of the Stephanus edition.)²³⁹ But Plato elaborates this program of purification in other dialogues; not surprisingly, its main components remain Pythagorean. In *Republic*, for example, the souls of philosophers begin their education with mathematics, harmonics, and astronomy.²⁴⁰ Yet

²³³ Ibid., 79d1–4; trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 70.

²³⁴ Supra note 212.

²³⁵ *Phaed.* 67b2; trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 58. See also *Phaed.* 69c–d, in which Plato says that philosophers are the true Bacchantes.

²³⁶ Supra note 94.

²³⁷ *Phaed.* 62b1–5, 81d9–e2, 82e1–2; see also 66b6, 66c6, 67a7, and 79c7–8.

²³⁸ Ibid., 80b1–5; in Cooper, *Plato*, 70.

²³⁹ 58b5, 65e6, 66d8, 66e5, 67a5, 67a7, 67b2 (bis), 67c3, 67c5, 68b4, 69c1, 69c2, 69c6, 79d2, 80d6, 80e2, 81b1, 81d3, 82c1, 82d6, 83d9, 83e2, 108b4, 108c3, 109b7 (bis), 109d3, 110c2, 110e3, 111b6, 111d8, 114c1.

²⁴⁰ Speaking of astronomy and harmonics, Plato writes that “these two sciences are somehow akin, as the Pythagoreans say” (*Resp.* 7.530d6–10; trans. C. D. C. Reeve, *Plato: Republic* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 2004), 225). For similar praise of harmonics, see *Tim.* 47c4–e2. For the

these studies are merely preliminary, for their mathematical ratios are “connected to body,” and their subjects “are visible things.”²⁴¹ Plato even ridicules satisfaction with the visible heights accessible to astronomy, when superior but invisible heights may be achieved by dialectic.²⁴² Only this supreme study dispenses with sensations, images, and hypotheses; only dialectic “journeys to the first principle [*archē*] itself.”²⁴³ Recalling the *archē*, we return to the question with which Greek philosophy began—ironically, the question of the Milesian monists. Unlike their material *archai*, Plato’s are formal, and uniting them all is one supreme Form. His principle, his final revelation, this most sacred object of his philosophical cult, is the Form of the Good.

Understanding this Form is no small matter, and even Socrates shrinks before the task,²⁴⁴ but elsewhere Plato writes that “the excellence of each thing is something which is organized and has order,”²⁴⁵ so that *the Good*, the excellence of the whole cosmos, should be the cosmic organization and order.²⁴⁶ This accords with the cosmogonic story of *Timaeus*, where “the god wanted everything to be good and nothing to be bad so far as that was possible, and so he took all that was visible—not at rest but in discordant and disorderly motion—and brought it from a state of disorder to one of order, because he believed that order was in every way better than disorder.”²⁴⁷ The god’s template, it thus seems, was the Form of the Good.²⁴⁸ When we recall the Pythagoreans’ exaltation of light over darkness, we should not be surprised by the analogy with which Plato describes this supreme Form. Just as our eyes need the light of the sun in order to perceive the sensible world, so too does our reason need the truth of the Good in order to understand the intelligible world.²⁴⁹

similarity of seeing and hearing, on account of the fineness of their media (air and fire, respectively), see *Tim.* 45b3–c7.

²⁴¹ *Resp.* 7.530b3; trans. Reeve, *Plato: Republic*, 225.

²⁴² At *Resp.* 7.528e–529c, he says this satisfaction would allow that someone pursues “higher studies” simply by “leaning his head back and studying ornaments on a ceiling.” At *Tim.* 91d6–e1, similarly, he says that the souls of “men who studied the heavenly bodies but in their naïveté believed that the most reliable proofs concerning them could be based upon visual observation” are, in their next life, reincarnated as birds (Cooper, *Plato*, 1145 and 1290, respectively).

²⁴³ *Resp.* 7.533c8–d1; trans. Reeve, *Plato: Republic*, 228.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 6.506d7–8.

²⁴⁵ *Gorg.* 506e1–2; trans. Zeyl, in Cooper, *Plato*, 851.

²⁴⁶ For elaborations of this controversial point, see Cooper, “The Psychology of Justice in Plato 1977,” 151–57; Reeve, *Plato: Republic*, 305, and Lloyd P. Gerson, *Knowing Persons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 177.

²⁴⁷ *Tim.* 30a2–6; trans. Zeyl, in Cooper, *Plato*, 1236. Reeve, “Plato’s Metaphysics of Morals,” 49, additionally cites *Gorg.* 507e6–508a8, and *Phileb.* 66a6–7.

²⁴⁸ For an elaboration of this controversial point, see Menn, *Plato on God as Nous*.

²⁴⁹ *Resp.* 6.507a–509d.

The task of the Platonic philosopher is to understand this world, to chew his senses in favor of his intellect. The story of his education, the allegory of the cave, is thus a dualistic story of an escape “from the darkness into the light.”²⁵⁰ He must use “pure thought alone,” as we have seen, “to track down each reality pure and by itself.”²⁵¹ But he cannot stop with a separate vision of each of these realities, the Forms. To achieve perfect understanding, he must perceive their rational order, the one Form of Forms, the Form of the Good. Along the way, “he imitates them and tries to become as like them as he can.”²⁵² Only by coming to resemble their perfect harmony, in the end, does he assimilate himself to the benign order of the cosmos itself. Purified to this extent, finally, “the philosopher, by consorting with what is orderly and divine, becomes as divine and orderly as a human being can.”²⁵³ In life his divinity is tainted by embodiment; after death, according to *Phaedo*, the souls of philosophers can “spend the rest of time with the gods.”²⁵⁴ The eschatological myth of this dialogue promises a blessed afterlife,²⁵⁵ where besides communicating with the gods in speech, philosophical souls will breathe pure ether and see the “sun and moon and stars as they are.”²⁵⁶ Plato thus imagines philosophical divinization as a consummation of ethereal purity and celestial light.²⁵⁷

Conclusion

Plato’s program of purification and divination is too elaborate for us to do it justice in this short essay. In its fullest version it synthesizes ideas from the Milesians and Anaxagoras, Parmenides and Heraclitus, even the Sophists and Hippocratics.²⁵⁸ But its fundamental outlines are Pythagorean.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 7.518a3; trans. Reeve, *Plato: Republic*, 211.

²⁵¹ *Phaed.* 66a1–3; trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 57.

²⁵² *Resp.* 6.500c4–5; trans. Reeve, *Plato: Republic*, 194.

²⁵³ *Resp.* 6.500c9–d2; trans. Reeve, *Plato: Republic*, 194.

²⁵⁴ *Phaed.* 81a9; trans. Grube, in Cooper, *Plato*, 71. See also 108c3–5.

²⁵⁵ *Phaed.* 107c–114c.

²⁵⁶ *Phaed.* 111b1–c3; in Cooper, *Plato*, 95.

²⁵⁷ For a fuller discussion of divinization in Plato, see David Sedley, “The Ideal of Godlikeness,” in *Plato 2: Ethics, Politics, Religion, and the Soul*, ed. Gail Fine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 309–28, and Julia Annas, *Platonic Ethics Old and New* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999), 52–71.

²⁵⁸ We have at least alluded to Plato’s synthesis of ideas from the first four on this list. As for the last two, the Hippocratic theory of health as a balance of humors (see, e.g., *Nat. hom.*), which itself owes much to the Pythagoreans (especially Alcmaeon of Croton), corresponds neatly with the Platonic account of virtue as a harmony of soul-parts (*Resp.* 4.444d3–e3). The Sophists, for their part, appear often as opponents in the dialogues, but despite Plato’s numerous criticisms of them, he does occasionally adopt their ideas. For instance, the Sophistic diagnosis of god as the invention of a clever statesman (Sisyphus, DK 88B25) anticipates Plato’s “noble lie” (*Resp.* 3.414b–416d), both of which bear a curious resemblance to the parade of shadows at the bottom of the Cave (*Resp.* 514b1–515a1).

Following these outlines, we have observed how humans are conceived by Plato as hybrids of stable reason above, the body with all its motions below. The cosmos as we know it by use of our reason must therefore be distinguished from the cosmos as we perceive it through our senses. Each philosopher must absorb this distinction into his own life, furthermore, by purifying his divine reason of its association with the merely human and mortal capacities. Recognizing the illusions fostered by these capacities, in fact, the Platonic philosopher frees himself from all the desires they incite. He finds all his comfort rather in contemplation of the cosmic order. With the outlines of this program now drawn, we are in a position to notice a peculiar ambivalence in Platonic philosophy.

In psychology, first, Plato dualistically divides the human into good and bad parts, identifying our selves with our reason and thereby alienating us from our body and everything it taints (i.e., appetites and emotions, sensations and imagination). Any accurate psychology must divide the human somehow if it is to account for the conflicting motives of every human life. Plato's own way of describing this division—despite the air of inevitability that surrounds it for those, like us, who inhabit the philosophical and religious cultures he helped to fashion—is a result of the contingent history that fashioned him. Most immediately, this was a Pythagorean history; more distantly, it seems to have been a confluence of two Eastern currents: Zoroastrianism and the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. Though at odds cosmologically, both recommended purity of thought, and it may have been this agreement that helped ensure the supremacy of pure thought as a Greek ideal, first among the Pythagoreans, and then later for Plato and his successors.

This psychological dualism, a division of pure thought from everything else, nonetheless served an eschatological monism. The consummation of Plato's philosophy, as we have seen, is an assimilation of the philosopher's self to the cosmic order that is the Good. Downstream from the Upaniṣads, Plato thus preserves something very like their efforts to assimilate *ātman* to *Brahman*. For his cosmology maintains monism and dualism ambivalently—and must do so in order to preserve the goals of his ethics. Consider the vexed relationship between Forms and their material instances. Sometimes Plato writes as if Form and matter—or Being and becoming—were two separate realms between which the individual soul must decide, after the manner of a Zoroastrian.²⁵⁹ At other times he writes as if the realm of Form—and of the Form of the Good especially—were the only real reality,

²⁵⁹ E.g., *Phaed.* 79c–e. See also *Resp.* 10.602c4–603b2, *Theaet.* 179e2–181b7, and *Soph.* 248a7–13.

so that sensible things are only illusions with no independent existence.²⁶⁰ In this picture, the soul must liberate itself from the cycle of reincarnation by recognizing them as such, after the manner of a yogi.²⁶¹

We began this essay with Socrates in his cell recalling the disappointment he experienced with the materialist monism of his philosophical predecessors. Despite the starkly dualistic terms of his final speeches, however, he does not propose a purebred dualism there. Instead, we find a mixture of monism with dualism, and both appear necessary in order to justify his allegiance to the program of purification and divinization that is arguably his deepest commitment. The result is not just ambivalence, but paradox. As far as the relationship between Form and matter is concerned, material things cannot have an existence independent of Form, lest this independence compromise the cosmic unity guaranteed by the Form of Forms. Yet neither can they be mere illusions, for if the perfect unity of the Forms is all that really exists, what could remain to cause these illusions? In moral terms, something independent of the one Good appears necessary in order to create the evil illusion of plurality, even though the independence of this evil cause subverts the cherished unity of reality that is the ideal of purification.

This ideal is the divine, and Plato promised its company to philosophers. In his final moments, Socrates anticipates this company himself, assured that he is fit for it. Philosophy, as he says, is training for death, and he has been training for years.²⁶² Although he has hitherto heeded Philolaus's prohibition of suicide, now that his own death is required by law, and his *daimōn* makes no protest, he welcomes it.²⁶³ What he achieved afterwards we cannot know, but the Platonic program of purification and divinization that he expresses before drinking the hemlock has had a long afterlife among his intellectual heirs. Plotinus, for instance, incorporated matter into his cosmos in order to explain evil, yet this explanation works only by sub-

²⁶⁰ See Resp. 6.509b6–8. For a discussion of this point, see Lloyd P. Gerson, "Platonic Dualism," *Monist* 69 (1986): 352–69.

²⁶¹ See Theaet. 176e3–177a8, Resp. 6.498d1–4, and the Myth of Er, Resp. 10.614b–621b. Like Pindar's eschatology (e.g., Ol. 2.56–60), Plato's includes punishments for those who fail to live a good life. If a man wastes his life in impurity, the penalty is reincarnation as a woman; for a recidivist (who, despite his feminine incarnation, somehow retains a male soul), the penalty is still further incarnation as "some wild animal that resembled the wicked character he had acquired" (Tim. 42b5–c4; see also Phaedr. 246b–250c).

²⁶² Phaed. 64a4–6, 80e7–81a2.

²⁶³ Ibid., 61d–62c. Indeed, the alacrity with which he drinks the hemlock lends his arguments additional rhetorical force. Socrates' *daimōn* was his guardian angel, as it were, warning him not to take certain actions. See, e.g., Apol. 31c8–d4 and Xenophon's Mem. 1.1.4, where its operation is wider. For a brief discussion, see Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 33; for a longer one, see Reeve, *Socrates in the Apology*, 68–70.

verting the total sovereignty of the One.²⁶⁴ Augustine, similarly, explains evil only by compromising the omnipotence of God.²⁶⁵ These are controversial claims that go beyond the scope of this essay to be sure; in light of what we have learned here, however, we should not be surprised to find that the mixture of monism and dualism that Plato inherited, synthesized masterfully, but could never fully resolve, emerges in one way or another in the traditions indebted to his ambivalent philosophy.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ See, e.g., *Enn.* 5.1.1.

²⁶⁵ See, e.g., *Enchir.* 10–12.

²⁶⁶ I would like to thank the colleagues, students, friends, and family whose comments upon various drafts of this essay contributed in one way or another to its development: David Reeve, Jim Leshner, Bill Race, Georgia Machermer, Randall Styers, Chris Childers, Jeff Kearney, Norman Sandridge, David Liu, Steve Bennett, Ted Gellar, and Sarah Miller.

Loren T. Stuckenbruck

The Interiorization of Dualism within the Human Being in Second Temple Judaism

The Treatise of the Two Spirits (1QS III:13–IV:26)
in its Tradition-Historical Context

Introduction

Since the late 1960s it has become fashionable in studies of early Jewish literature to distinguish between various sorts of “dualism.”¹ Commonly in the literature, this term has been regarded as a conceptual framework that involves two opposing systems, concepts, principles, or groups that can be neither resolved nor reduced in relation to one another. Based on such an understanding, scholars conducting research in relation to Second Temple Judaism have classified several of the following types of dualism, each of which is made to carry a specific sense:² metaphysical dualism; cosmic dualism; spatial dualism; eschatological dualism; ethical dualism; soteriological dualism; theological dualism; physical dualism; anthropological dualism; and psychological dualism. To be sure, such distinctions have their value. They reflect efforts to describe ways ancient writers conceptualized and organized their social and religious worlds for their constituent readers. Moreover, the devisers of such categories are well aware that dualistic language does not always mean the same thing in each text; fre-

¹ See in particular James H. Charlesworth, “A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13–4:26 and the ‘Dualism’ Contained in the Gospel of John,” *NTS* 15 (1968–69): 389–418, reprinted in *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 76–106 (especially 76–89).

² The categories listed here are variously found in the following large-scale studies on the Dead Sea scrolls: Hans W. Huppenbauer, *Der Mensch zwischen zwei Welten* (ATANT 34; Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1959) and Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Gott und Belial* (SUNT 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969). See further especially John G. Gammie, “Spatial and Ethical Dualism in Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature,” *JBL* 93 (1974): 356–85; Deborah Dimant, “Qumran Sectarian Literature,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. Michael E. Stone (CRINT 2/II; Assen and Philadelphia: Van Gorcum and Fortress Press, 1984), 533–36; Jean Duhaime, “Dualistic Reworking in the Scrolls from Qumran,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 32–56; and, especially, Jörg Frey, “Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought in the Qumran Library: Reflections on their Background and History,” in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Published in Honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten*, ed. Moshe Bernstein, Florentino García Martínez and John Kampen (STDJ 23; Leiden/New York/Köln, 1997), 275–335 (especially 280–85; hereafter *Legal Texts*).

quently, ideas conveyed by sometimes very different writers with distinguishable aims, if appropriately understood, resist synthesis into an overarching scheme. Finally, these categories assist us in recognizing that in any given text, dualistic language may be at work on more than one level, with the consequence that it is not always possible to “map” these levels out in genetic relation to one another.

Nonetheless, we may find the apparent necessity to come up with so many classifications bewildering. Not all dualisms are equally dualistic. Whereas adherents of Zoroastrianism espoused an absolute, thoroughly dualistic world consisting of two co-eternal opposites associated, respectively, with a good and evil being, other dualistic patterns are modified or less absolute. Despite an increasingly qualified use of the term “dualism”, it continues to be applied without differentiation in discussions of texts concerned with oppositions between absolute Good and absolute Evil, between forces of good and evil, between an upper heavenly world and a lower earthly world, between the present world and a future one, between people who are righteous and people who are wicked, between those who adhere to a particular system of belief or redeemer figure and those who do not, between the creator and creation, between matter and spirit, between body and soul, and between conflicting good and bad impulses within the human being. Are all these oppositions of the same ilk? With so many kinds of distinctions—and these relate to almost every imaginable sphere of human existence (space, time, society, and human nature)—we may ask: to what extent does it remain meaningful to speak of “dualism?”³ Does, for example, every sort of “duality,” “antithesis,” or “opposition” count as a kind of “dualism,” and, if so, given that human life, past and present, is imbued with the experience of tension and opposition, can “dualism” be made to describe the experience of every human being?⁴ What role does dualistic language play in negotiating contradictions between ideology (religious,

³ For this reason, Ugo Bianchi, “Dualism,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (16 vols.; New York and London: Macmillan, 1987) 4:506–12, 506, has emphasized that “Not every duality or polarity is dualistic, but only those that involve the duality or polarity of causal principles. Thus not every pair of opposites...can be labeled as dualistic, even when their opposition is emphasized.” Similarly, N. T. Wright, *New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 252–56, distinguishes between “dualities,” which refer to a broad range of distinctions/oppositions, and “dualism,” in which the contrast between reality of experience and theologies held is so great that there is a “radical split” (256) between the two. While Wright is correct, his use of the distinction mirrors the religious (and social) locations he assigns to groups in ancient Judaism: in contrast to “mainline Judaism,” Jews on the social margins were more inclined to think in dualistic categories.

⁴ Thus it is possible to suggest that “dualism” be restricted to the description of co-eternal principles; see, for example, Shaul Shaked, “Qumran and Iran: Further Considerations,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972): 433–46, who has more radically questioned whether the term appropriately describes ideas that are ultimately coordinated with a monotheistic framework.

political, economic, etc.) on the one hand and the experience of compromise, disappointment, or failure on the other?⁵

On the basis of Jewish literature from the Second Temple period, I would like in what follows to consider the degree to which “oppositional or contrastive ideas” are coordinated with an understanding of human nature. In particular, the present discussion will focus on the language of dual opposition in four Jewish compositions that originated during the second century B.C.E.: (1) Ben Sira; (2) *1 Enoch* 91–105 (esp. 91:1–10 and the so-called *Epistle of Enoch*); (3) *Musar le-Mevin* (also designated *Sapiential Work A* or *Instruction* from Qumran Caves 1 and 4); and (4) the Teaching on the Two Spirits preserved in the Qumran *Community Rule* (III 13 – IV 26). Since the Teaching on the Two Spirits contains the most well developed understanding of the human being (*anthrōpos*) and the world (*cosmos*), it merits special attention here.

Before considering these documents, I would like to identify several assumptions I bring to the analysis. First, I assume that a consideration of language about human nature may throw light on how the writers of the aforementioned texts interpreted the experience of their social groups and religious communities, and that the oppositions and contrasts articulated in these texts were perceived and linguistically organized in relation to this experience. Second, the following discussion assumes that the writers of these documents were adopting already familiar modes of discourse that they, in turn, reshaped in relation to their respective social locations and religious understanding. Insofar as they articulated ideas associated with any of the “dualisms” referred to above, they should be seen, in some way, as concerned with finding a conceptual place for their own communities’ religious identities, whether broadly or more narrowly defined. Third, we may assume that the language the authors chose to express dual oppositions reflected the ways they, as pious Jews, perceived and understood the *cosmos*. Therefore, reflection on human nature does not always express itself in explicit language about human nature. Whether directly addressed or buried beneath layers of ideas about cosmology, “anthropology”—that is, perception and interpretation of human nature—is never far away. Though anthropology (in the sense just referred to) would have been an indispensable component of religious ideology, the texts themselves may circle around it, actually referring to oppositions in terms of “group” conflict (the opposition between “us” and “them”) or principles of good and evil, without having

⁵ This is not to suggest that ideas expressed in terms of oppositions are the exclusive domain of socially marginalized or oppressed communities, as the co-ordination of inconsistencies between small-scale ideologies and large-scale structures is an activity endemic to any society as a whole. See in this regard Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London and New York: ARK Paperbacks, 1966), 140–58 (chapter entitled “The System at War with Itself”).

much to say directly about how social discontinuity works itself out in terms of what is going on within a human being. Not all of the texts to be considered provide sustained attention to the question of what a human being is. Yet by relating what is said to the wider context of polarising oppositions expressed in the documents, we will be able to examine the extent to which the tensions inherent in such linguistic categories have been “interiorized.”

Since not all oppositions are reducible to the same degree, our focus on language of opposition rather than, strictly speaking, on “dualism” will allow us to explore how broadly a given writer understood the latter to apply. While authors could lay claim to unambiguous oppositions—whether spatial, social, or anthropological—how do they reconcile such a framework with the more complex web of uncertainties that do not seem to fit? Is there something about the nature and experience of the human being that defies reductionistic and one-sided “pigeonholing?” To what extent do any of the texts offer clues that betray the admission of complexity, and how is this ambivalence negotiated?

Ben Sira

We turn first to the wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira, composed in Hebrew during the early part of the second century and translated into Greek by his grandson towards the end of that century. At the heart of this work is the apparently categorical division of humanity between the “sinner,” on the one hand, and the “pious” or “godly” person who fears the Lord, on the other.⁶ This ideological distinction becomes clouded, though, when the question is asked: what makes one a “sinner” and what makes one “pious?” In what sense are these categories mutually exclusive for Ben Sira?

One answer may be found in Sir 42:24–25 and 33:15,⁷ in which the author declares, respectively:

42:24 All things are twofold (δυσσός; שְׁנַיִם-Ms. B⁸), each over against the other, and he has not made anything lacking;

⁶ While the language and terminology varies (i.e., sometimes the more traditional distinction between “wise one” and “fool” is used), the division remains clear-cut; for passages which specifically contrast these groups, see especially Sir 12:1–7; 13:17; 15:1–13; 16:13; 29:14–20; 32:14–18; 33:14; and 39:24–27.

⁷ See also Sir 11:14, though here a contrast between poverty and wealth is included; significantly, the opposition between these is not as categorical as the other distinctions; see Benjamin G. Wright and Claudia V. Camp, “‘Who Has Been Tested by Gold and Found Perfect?’ Ben Sira’s Discourse of Riches and Poverty,” *Henoch* 23 (2001): 1–24. Significantly, however, the Hebrew ms. A adds here the statement, “sin and righteous ways are from the Lord.”

42:25 one establishes the good things of the other,
and who will be satisfied/filled with beholding his glory?

33:15 And so look at all the works of the Most High;
(they are) in twos (δύο δύο; שנים), the one over against the other.

According to Ben Sira, the cosmos consists of a principled opposition; God has endowed the world with a balanced bifurcation. The distinction between the “righteous” and “sinners” is to be understood within this framework. Of particular interest are the author’s reflections in 33:10–15. Though all human beings are created in the same way (“from the ground...from the dust”), God has still chosen to distinguish between them; God has “appointed their ways” (33:10), even sanctifying some while cursing others (33:11). The author thinks that people are essentially “wired” in one of two ways; or, to use the analogy of the text, they are different products of “clay” fashioned according to the judgment of their potter (33:13). Such language gives the impression that such distinctions drawn among humanity do not reflect an unspecified number of shades or colors; they are not multi-dimensional, but rather are organized into irreducible pairs. Along these lines, the author equates three series of oppositions (ἀπέναντι) that do not overlap: good is the opposite of evil, life is the opposite of death, the sinner is the opposite of the godly (33:14). At the same time, this instruction underscores the essential goodness of God as creator.⁹ Things (the good and the bad, life and death, the righteous and the wicked) are such because they are simply meant to be that way, as complementary opposites.¹⁰ This opposition, constructed along ethical lines, is correlated with principles that are not personified in any way beyond human social categories. These principles frame the structure of the created order.

In another passage, the author presses his idea of opposition a logical step further: the man who “sins against his marriage bed” is to be held culpable, because “before the universe was created, it [his deed] was known” to God (23:20). This point illustrates that, for the author, divine foreknowledge and human responsibility for behaviour may be integrated, especially

⁸ The Hebrew text (in this case, from the Cairo Geniza), where cited, is taken from Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira* (SVT, 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

⁹ On Sir 33:13–14, see Randal A. Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative Literary Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment* (EJL, 8; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 139. Humanity is held responsible for evil, being endowed with a free will to choose one way or the other; see further below on 15:11–20.

¹⁰ Concerning the influence of Greek philosophy on this understanding of the world, see David Winston, “Theodicy in Ben Sira and Stoic Philosophy,” in *Of Scholars, Savants, and Their Texts*, ed. Ruth Link-Salinger (New York: Lang, 1989), 234–49, and the discussion of John J. Collins in *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 85.

within the framework of creation. Significantly, though, in Ben Sira this point remains undeveloped; it raises questions about theodicy that exceed the author's aims.

Much to the contrary, the author ultimately insists that God cannot be held to account for the wicked acts that sinners perpetrate. Thus, on another level and along more traditional lines, Ben Sira emphasizes that human choice determines ethical differences, a point that is not mitigated by his *ad hoc* argument that "from woman sin had its beginning" (25:25; cf. 25:16–26).¹¹ Especially important are the arguments he directs against anyone who might hold God responsible for sinful actions (15:11–12)¹²:

15:11 ...he (the Lord) does not do what he hates.¹³

15:14 From the beginning he (the Lord) made the human being (ἄνθρωπον), and left him in the power of his freedom of choice (רצוֹן; διαβουλίου αὐτοῦ).

15:16 He has put before you fire and water;
for whatever you wish, stretch forth your hand.

15:17 Before human beings are life and death,
and whatever he is disposed for will be given to him.

15:20 ...he has never commanded the human to sin

Where, then, is the fundamental oppositional structure located for Ben Sira? It is external to human nature itself. Throughout, the document treats humans as whole beings. At any one time, they are either wholly sinners or wholly godly, belonging to one type of humanity or the other.¹⁴ Conceptually, at least, a great gulf separates the two.

This neat division is blurred, though, in two ways, as the author reveals his awareness that in fact experience is far more complicated. First, it is possible for one who has sinned to repent and be forgiven. In such a case,

¹¹ That is, this statement, rather than expressing the origin of sin in humanity *per se*, functions more specifically to underscore the pitfalls men should be wary of when they relate to women; see Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes, Introduction and Commentary* (AB 39; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1987), 348–49.

¹² It is thus likely that Ben Sira has in view an opponent who he claims renders God culpable by denying human freedom. On this and the passage in 15:11–20 generally, see Maurice Gilbert, "God, Sin and Mercy: Sirach 15:11–18:14," in *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham-Ushaw College 2001*, ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel (BZAW, 321; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 118–35 (especially 119–21).

¹³ Here we may follow the Hebrew as it more accurately corresponds to the context than the Greek, which, through an exhortation, does not raise the problem at all: "you shall not do what he [God] hates."

¹⁴ See especially the discussion of human free will in Ben Sira by Jean Hadot, *Penchant mauvais et volonté libre dans la Sagesse de Ben Sira (L'Ecclésiastique)* (Brussels: Presses Universitaires, 1970), 9–31: free will is a morally neutral capacity to choose between good and evil, without drawing internal distinctions in the human being.

however, the author is not referring to the activity of “sinners” so much as to the righteous “who fear the Lord” (21:6; cf. also 4:26; 17:24; 18:21; 21:1–2). It becomes clear that the godly are not in any way a “sinless” category; the author writes:

Who will put whips over my thoughts, and the discipline of wisdom over my mind, so as not to spare me in my errors, and not overlook my sins? Otherwise my mistakes may be multiplied, and my sins may abound... (23:2–3)

Being pious or among the righteous is, strictly speaking, not as descriptive as might first appear. Instead, the notion of “sinners” and “godly” is ultimately a social concept. These terms refer broadly to two groups: from Ben Sira’s perspective, there are those on the one hand who ignore the Torah (e.g. 41:8; 42:2), lack wisdom (37:21), and misuse wealth (34:21–27), and there are those on the other hand who take a proper attitude towards their own sin by seeking forgiveness and the removal of evil from their lives (e.g. 2:11; 3:3,14–15; 5:6–7; 23:4) and by adhering to Ben Sira’s instruction to acquire wisdom and obey the Torah (1:14–27; 9:15; 15:1–10; 19:20–24; 21:11; 24:23–34; 35:1; 38:34–39:11).¹⁵

Second, Ben Sira allows for the possibility that sinners do not always “sin.” This idea is not really developed and would not have served the exhortational purposes of the document. The faint echo of this possibility might be inferred, though, among one of several passages that mention the dividedness of the ungodly. God is not to be approached “in a double heart” (1:28, καρδίᾳ δισσηῖ); in such a disposition one may openly participate in the assembly without actually fearing God. In effect, having a “double heart” is tantamount to, or no better than, having a “heart...full of deceit” (1:30).¹⁶ In the same way, being “double-tongued” (διγλωσσος) is equivalent to being a “sinner” (6:1, ὁ ἁματωλός; cf. 5:14; 28:9, 13). In neither case is there any hint that the wicked experience an inner moral conflict, that is, a struggle between good and evil within their nature. Dividedness here is not about inner turmoil, but rather in itself describes a human who *in*

¹⁵ Concerning the identification of wisdom with the Torah as the basis for life commended in Ben Sira, see Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, 54–57.

¹⁶ Significantly, the *Testament of Qahat* from Cave 4 (4Q542), the fragmentary remains of which show no signs of a cosmic dualism, contrasts a “double heart” (לב ולב) from “walking in uprightness...with a pure heart, and with a righteous and good spirit” (1 i 9–10). Here, as in Ben Sira and *1 En.* 90:4 (see below), we have nothing to do with psychological dualism. Similarly, the condition of being “two-faced” is picked up later in *Test. of Asher* 3–6, where it is assigned to “sinners” or those who commit evil deeds (4:1–2), while single-mindedness is the essential character of the righteous who, though able to do both good and evil, are nevertheless to be considered good as a whole.

this state cannot be holistically conceived.¹⁷ One passage envisions the division in terms reminiscent of the more widespread “two ways” instruction; in 2:12 the author pronounces a “woe” against “the sinner who traverses on two paths ἐπὶ δύο τριβούς.” If these paths are those of good and evil, then the sinner can indeed live a life that includes what is good. Though it is possible that here the author thinks of conflicting dispositions within the sinner, it seems more likely that the dualistic principles set up by God in the created order remain exterior to the *anthropos*. Thus an internalization of contrastive principles does not become a feature of Ben Sira’s anthropology, which centers, instead, on different aspects of creatureliness.¹⁸

Admonition and Epistle of Enoch

Like Ben Sira, the materials comprising the last major section of *1 Enoch* (ch. 91–105) draw heavily on ethical dualistic categories to distinguish the righteous from the wicked. In making this distinction, these Enochic passages, despite their provenance from different sources,¹⁹ display a remarkable coherence in the categories of opposition they use. Unlike Ben Sira, however, the oppositions to which they refer are not explicitly coordinated in any way with the order of the cosmos. Moreover, in contrast to Ben Sira, these materials allow very little room for ambiguity; human responsibility in general and, more specifically, the culpability of the wicked are categorically reinforced. For example, the author of the *Epistle* departs from an impression left by the earlier Enoch traditions (*1 En.* 6–11; 12–16; and 81:1–82:4; 85:3–10)²⁰ by stating unequivocally that “the human has created it [sin], and those who commit it will become subject to a great curse” (98:4).

¹⁷ In this way, “sinners” in Ben Sira are made to exemplify a creatureliness “gone wrong” (as those who are not integrated in the self), while the righteous embody an “elite” form of creatureliness which, though categorically distinct from God, is nevertheless able to contemplate and behave in relation to God; see Oda Wischmeyer, “Theologie und Anthropologie im Sirachbuch,” in *Ben Sira’s God* (see n. 11), 18–32 (especially 24–29).

¹⁸ See n. 15 above.

¹⁹ So, generally, the *Apocalypse of Weeks* (cf. *1 En.* 93:3b–10; 91:11–17), the larger *Epistle* (92:1–5; 94:1–105:2), and the *Admonition* (91:1–10, 18–19), with a piece following on from *1 En.* 81:1–82:4a in 93:1–3a; for a recent source-critical hypothesis of these originally separate passages, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36; 81–108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 334–37.

²⁰ In these passages the role of the rebellious angels in the origin or increase of wrongdoing on the earth is stressed; see Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “The Origins of Evil in Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition: The Interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4 in the Second and Third Centuries B.C.E.,” in *The Fall of the Angels*, ed. Christoph Auffarth and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (TBN 6; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 87–118 (especially 99–110).

Throughout *1 Enoch* 91–105, even including the *Apocalypse of Weeks*, special emphasis is placed on the opposition between the two “ways” or “paths” that are coordinated, respectively, with righteousness and wickedness. This sapiential instruction is clearest in 91:3–4, 91:18–19, and 94:1–5. Directly related to these conceptual categories is the social distinction between those who are righteous on the one hand and those who are sinners on the other (esp. 91:3b–4; 93:2–4; 94:1–11; 98:9–16; 101:1–9; 102:1–11; and 104:6). This coordinated, moralizing contrast between “ways” and groups of people is, of course, widespread in the sapiential biblical literature (cf. Prov 2:18–19; 4:27; 5:56; 7:25, 27; Deut 30:15; and Jer 21:8–14). In addition, it is evident in several early Jewish works (testamentary sections of the more contemporary Book of Tobit (cf. Tob. 4:5–6, 10, 19), the *Community Rule* (III 13–IV 26; see below), and in *2 Enoch* 30:15), and it underlies Wisdom 1–5 and Ben Sira 15:11–17. Finally, this contrast is picked up in the New Testament and a number of early Christian documents.²¹ Unlike the biblical tradition, in which being on one path or another leads to either life or death that ends up in the same place (*Sheol*), *1 Enoch* 91–105 and indeed *1 Enoch* as a whole, places the distinction between the righteous and wicked within an eschatological context. The rewards and punishments for righteous and wicked behavior are necessarily pushed beyond the bounds of this life into the next. This reflects the apocalyptic setting already given in the earlier Enochic traditions in the *Book of Watchers* (*1 En.* 1:1; 25:4), in which the distinctions between these groups are made visible in the afterlife. Ultimately, it is only after death that the Enochic authors expect the consequences for actions to become fully manifest (for the righteous: 91:10; 92:3; 96:1–3; 103:2–4; for the wicked and ungodly: 96:4–8; 97:1–10; 100:1–13; 102:3, 5–11; 103:5–15).

For all their interest in the afterlife, in *1 Enoch* 91–105 the authors take for granted that the identity of the righteous and wicked can already be known. To be sure, the author of the *Apocalypse of Weeks* seems to locate his own time within the seventh week, when his group (called the “chosen righteous ones”) are still being formed and selected from the “eternal plant of righteousness” (which is Israel; cf. 93:10) in order to receive (in the future) revealed knowledge about creation.²² Nonetheless, he adheres vigo-

²¹ Cf. e.g. Matt 7:13–14; Gal 5:16–6:8; *Didache* 1–6; *Epistle of Barnabas* 17–20; *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Mandates*; *T. Ash.* 1:3–5:4 (see n. 15). See, further, *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.1; *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 5.7; and Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.5.

²² Cf. *1 En.* 93:10, translated from Ethiopic with the Aramaic from 4QEn^a 1 iv 12–13 reflected in the use of brackets: “And with its end there shall be chosen e[lect one]s (יְבָרְכֶנּוּ בְּחִירִין) as witnesses of righteousness (לְשֹׁדֵי קִשְׁט) from the eternal plant of righteousness (קִשְׁט עֶלְמָא) to whom shall be given seven f[old] teaching concerning wisdom and knowledge.”

rously to the notion that the boundaries between these and the wicked are clearly drawn. There is, in principle, little room for ambiguity.

In addition to the social-ethical oppositional distinctions between groups in this life and in the life hereafter, another duality emerges that plays a crucial role in expressing how divine justice works: the distinction between human soul/spirit (Eth. *manfas*; CB: ψυχή, πνεῦμα²³) on the one hand and the flesh (*šegā*; τὸ σῶμα τῆς σαρκός) on the other. Whereas the social-ethical contrast involves two opposing paths and groups that are concurrent, the anthropological split between flesh and spirit is based entirely on the distinction between this life and the next. This is illustrated most clearly in exhortations and woes pronounced, respectively, on the righteous and wicked in *1 Enoch* 102:4–103:8. For the author, what counts ultimately is the “spirit” or “soul” of the human. Whereas it is the body of the pious one may that may have endured suffering, it is the “soul”—that is, *not* the body—that will descend to *Sheol* and be rewarded (102:5; 103:4). In the same way, while the wicked might have enjoyed wealth and luxuries in their bodies in this life, their blessedness is only apparent (103:5–6; cf. also 97:7–98:3); beyond death, their souls will be brought to *Sheol* and punished with “great distress” (103:7: *mendābēhomu ‘abiya*; ἐν ἀνάγκῃ μεγάλῃ; cf. also 98:3). Here the human is not viewed as a single being consisting of body and soul; rather, the soul (not the body!) is made responsible for actions and hence receives rewards or punishments. No resurrection of the body is thus envisioned. Once the righteous “souls” have been brought to life and out of *Sheol* to join the company of heavenly angels (104:2,4,6), *Sheol* will be transformed into a place of punishment for the souls of the wicked (103:7–8).²⁴

While the absolute distinction between body and soul is the author’s way of dealing with the apparent lack of divine justice meted out to the wicked in this life, we would be mistaken to understand this as a form of “dualism.” It is not that the *nephesh* is categorically at odds with the body, but rather that it, and not the body, represents the place where the essential, accountable activity occurs.²⁵ In effect, this means that the author’s ethical contrast which distinguishes out good from bad, has not been interiorized. The understanding of human nature in *1 Enoch* 91–105 does not express itself in terms of warring components that are continuously at odds.

²³ The Greek text is taken from the Chester Beatty papyrus as conveniently edited in Matthew Black, *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece* (PVTG 3; Leiden: Brill, 1970).

²⁴ Cf. on this the discussion by Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch Commentary*, 519.

²⁵ While for the righteous, this existence of retribution and reward is also in play in the *Book of Watchers* (cf. *1 En.* 9:1 and especially 22:8–13: the separation of the souls of the righteous from those of the sinners).

In *1 Enoch* 91:4, however, the expression “double heart” occurs twice as Enoch is made to warn his children:

...do not approach the truth with a double heart (*ba-kel'ē leb*),
and do not associate with those of double heart (*'ella ba-kel'ē leb*).

At first glance, it could appear that while the second phrase, in branding “those of double heart” as a group, does not allow for ambiguity that conceives of them doing good as well as bad, the first line holds open the possibility that anyone, perhaps even the righteous, might be subject to the “double heart.”²⁶ If the latter notion is there at all, though, the author of this passage does not develop this idea.²⁷ Whether behind the expression lies the Greek καρδία or ψυχή, the image of inner dividedness, similar to Ben Sira 1:28, is contrasted with the state of being implied by the exhortation following the *Shema* in Deut 6:5: “You shall love the Lord your God *with your whole heart* (LXX: καρδία), and *with all your soul* (ψυχή), and with all your strength.” Double-heartedness, then, has nothing to do with tension within the human being *per se*. As in Ben Sira, it has nothing to do with an *internal* conflict between good and bad, which the wicked succumb to and the righteous successfully control; instead, it is here a disposition of ineptitude that cannot even begin to pursue righteousness, which in the following verse (91:5) is presented as its opposite.

Given the similarities between Ben Sira and *1 Enoch* 91–105, a brief comparison shows the following: we have seen that the language of Ben Sira comes closer than these Enochic texts with respect to the possibility that a person can be “on two paths” at the same time (Sir. 2:12). Though someone simultaneously pursuing “two ways” is branded as a “sinner” by the author, the fact that this can be so to begin with reflects, if considered within the larger context, the “pairs” in which God has set up the world (11:14; 33:15; 42:24–25). Ben Sira does not resolve the logical tension between the double-pathed sinner and the dualities ascribed to the creator, but the possibility of human disposition towards “two ways” does go hand-in-glove with a dualism of principles that have been modified by the notion of God as creator of all. By contrast, none of the sources behind *1 Enoch* 91–105 entertain any form of a cosmic dualism. They, in turn, have virtually no room for ambiguity within the human being; the possibility that the pious one requires forgiveness is at best implied. This Enochic anthropology, even more than that of Ben Sira, views personhood as a totality of being that moves wholly in one or the other direction.

²⁶ See n. 5 above.

²⁷ A more likely understanding of the text is that the righteous are being warned away from a state of dividedness.

The Musar le-Mevin (Instruction for the Understanding One) and the Book of Mysteries

Musar le-Mevin, a document preserved in at least eight manuscripts from Qumran Caves 1 and 4 (1Q26; 4Q415; 4Q416; 4Q417; 4Q418; 4Q418a; 4Q418c; 4Q423), has received considerable attention since the early 1990s.²⁸ Together with a similar work known now as the *Book of Mysteries* (1Q27; 4Q299–301), *Musar* preserves evidence for bifurcations that move beyond the forms of ethical dualism found in Ben Sira and *1 Enoch* and integrate these binaries into language about human nature. Like Ben Sira and *1 Enoch* 91–105, *Musar* assumes a division within humankind between the righteous and the wicked. Unlike these documents, however, the knowledge of this distinction is not so much self-evident (whether in the present or anticipated future) as it is privileged information. As such, it is revealed to those who are invited to understand “the mystery of existence” (*raz nihyeh*),²⁹ that is, the pre-existent created order from which the world experienced in the past, present, and the ultimate future derives.³⁰ Yet this special knowledge of the world remains provisional. The one who understands is repeatedly encouraged to “investigate” (דרוש-4Q416 2 iii 14), to “observe” (הבט-4Q416 2 i 5; 4Q417 2 i 2, 18), to “meditate” on it (הגה-4Q418 43–45 i 4), and to “understand your mysteries” (4Q417 2 i 25). Significantly, the knowledge to be sought includes the difference between good and evil works in daily life (4Q417 2 i 8; cf. 4Q418 43–45 i 6).³¹

Because *Musar* is concerned with revealed knowledge, it assumes an ethical division within humanity that is extended into eschatological judgment when “justice (צדק) between good and evil” will be established (4Q416 1 10–13a). The document describes these respective groups in a number of ways.

First, there are the wicked. These are associated with “the work of wickedness” (4Q416 1 10), “the inclination of the flesh” (4Q416 1 16; cf. “evil inclination” in 4Q417 2 12³²), and they have or, more probably, are “spirits

²⁸ The publications are already numerous. See now the recent collection of essays edited by Charlotte Hempel, Armin Lange, and Hermann Lichtenberger, *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought* (BETL 159; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2002), with a bibliography on 445–54 (hereafter *Wisdom Texts*).

²⁹ See 4Q416 2 iii 17–18: “since he has opened your ear to the mystery of existence....” In 4Q418 123 ii 4, the fragmentary text associates special knowledge from God with “those who (already) understand the mystery of existence.”

³⁰ The associations of the *raz nihyeh* with simply the Torah or with esoteric wisdom are overly specific; see Matthew J. Goff, *The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction* (STDJ, 50; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 30–79.

³¹ The revelatory nature of the mystery is made to include instructions on daily life (4Q416 2 iii 9, 14).

³² An association between “evil inclination” (יצר רע) and “understandings of the flesh” (בננות) is implied in 4Q417 2 ii 12–14. Since in *Musar* the term for “inclination” can also be used in a

of flesh" (כל רוח בשר) that will be shaken on the day of judgment (4Q416 1 12; cf. also 4Q417 2 i 17 and 4Q418 81 2).³³ They are designated "children of iniquity" and "the foolish of heart" (4Q418 69 ii 8) who presumably have clung to evil (4Q418 69 ii 8). No possibility of meditation (הגוי) is offered to "the spirit of flesh," which may be identified with the further designation "the children of Seth" (4Q417 1 i 14b–18a).

The expression "spirit of flesh" merits some attention here. As the designations "inclination of flesh" and "spirit of flesh" might be taken to suggest, the *Musar* in several passages implies that there is an opposition in human nature between the flesh on the one hand and a "spirit" dimension on the other.³⁴ Though, as Jörg Frey has shown, "flesh" in *Musar* retains the range of meanings found in the Hebrew Bible,³⁵ "flesh" (בשר) functions several times as a qualifier for "inclination" and "spirit" that carries a negative connotation.³⁶ This is much in line with use of the term in a number of Dead Sea Scrolls documents, where it likewise seems bound up with "sin" and/or a lack of understanding (cf. 1QH V:30–33: "spirit of flesh;" VII:34–35; XII:30–31; 1QS XI:7, 9–10; most clearly, however, 1QS XI:11–12). In *Musar* and the similar texts, it is precisely the "fleshly" dimension of hu-

positive sense, so that creatures are able to walk "in the inclination of its understanding" (ביצר מביתו; so 4Q417 2 i 11 par. 4Q418 43–45 i 8), it anticipates later usage in rabbinic literature that underscores the freedom of the human will to act in one way or another. This is very close to the emphasis of Ben Sira; see n. 14 above and, in addition, the discussion of the "inclination" of the wicked in John J. Collins, "Wisdom, Apocalypticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Seers, Sibyls and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 369–83 (particularly 371–81).

³³ While the expression רוח בשר is collective in the reference in 4Q417 (where it is contrasted with "a spiritual people"), its meaning in the form כול רוח בשר in 4Q416 and 4Q418 seems less obvious. In 4Q416 the collective meaning is suggested by an implied contrast between this expression and "all the sons of his truth" (כל בני אמת; 1 10), so that the meaning of כול is "all." In 4Q418, the collective meaning is likewise implied, though less clear-cut, because the expression is followed up by two parallel phrases: (1) כול אשר שנא, which may mean either "everything which he [God] hates" (which would then refer to evil deeds associated with the "spirit of flesh") or "all whom he hates" (which could refer to the wicked as a whole); and (2) כול תעבות נפש, that is "every/all abomination(s) of the soul," which suggests that human deeds or inclinations are in view and thus does not seem to denote those who are wicked *per se*.

³⁴ This is more thoroughly discussed by Frey, "Flesh and Spirit in the Palestinian Jewish Sapiential Tradition and in the Qumran Texts: An Inquiry into the Background of Pauline Usage," in *Wisdom Texts*, 367–404 (particularly 385–97); see also Frey, "The Notion of 'Flesh' in 4QInstruction and the Background of Pauline Usage," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran: Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Oslo 1998*, ed. Daniel Falk *et al.* (STDJ, 35; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 197–226, and "Die paulinische Antithese von 'Fleisch' und 'Geist' und die palästinisch-jüdische Weisheitstradition," *ZNW* 90 (1999): 45–77. For the reason given immediately below, I am, however, reticent to regard this contrast as background for Paul's more thoroughgoing contrast between "spirit" and "flesh" in e.g. Rom 8:5–8; Gal 5:17, 19.

³⁵ See Frey, "Flesh and Spirit in the Palestinian Jewish Sapiential Tradition," 389–90, for examples.

³⁶ Esp. 4Q418 81 1–2; 4Q416 1 10–13; 4Q417 1 i 15–18.

man existence that obstructs understanding, so that, in the example mentioned above, “the spirit of flesh” cannot know the difference between good and evil (4Q417 2 i 17–18). Moreover, the one addressed in 4Q418 81 is told that, in his special position “as a holy of holies” in the land and among the *elim* (line 4), God “has separated” him “from every spirit of flesh” (lines 1–2). Finally, “every spirit of flesh” will be shaken up in eschatological judgment (4Q416 1 12). While the negative connotation of “flesh” in these texts seems beyond debate, one may question whether Frey is right in concluding that *Musar* provides evidence for the sort of opposition between “spirit of flesh” and “people of spirit” (see below) that “is the earliest parallel to the later Pauline antithesis between ‘flesh’ and ‘spirit.’”³⁷ Though Frey recognizes that use of “spirit” in *Musar* is varied, his wish to see an implied or proleptic antithesis of this sort is misleading. Too much emphasis can be placed on “flesh” when it is the *nomen rectum*. More than drawing a contrast between “spirit” versus “flesh,” the authors of the *Musar*, the *Hodayoth*, and the final hymn in 1QS seem just as concerned with distinguishing one kind of “spirit” from another, that is, one that corresponds to the human’s obedience and submission to God and one that is “depraved,” iniquitous, and conditioned by the “flesh.” Indeed, one might consider the following inference: if there is a spirit of flesh—which can be dispensed with as part of the ideal human being in *Musar*—then there may, by contrast, be a “spirit of holiness” or “holy spirit” that characterizes the chosen or understanding one. To be certain, *Musar* does refer several times to the “spirit” of the addressee and is able to designate this as a “holy spirit” (רוח קודש; see esp. 4Q416 2 ii 6, 17 iii 6). Yet this spirit does not provide an opposite to the negative connotation of “flesh.” It is vulnerable in that it is subject to corruption (4Q416 2 iii 6 –רוח רעה); it is neutral in that it is capable of being directed by the human will this way or that. Thus, if there is an opposition between “the spirit of flesh” and “a spiritual people” (4Q417 1 i 15–18), it is not given anything more than contextual expression by the text. In the end, what to Frey looks like an incipient anthropological dualism in *Musar* may in fact be no more than an ethical contrast which, though broaching the question of human nature, has not formalized itself in fixed anthropological language.³⁸ The open-ended language of *Musar* could, then, be a stepping-stone in the direction of two different dualities:

³⁷ As slightly overstated by Frey, “Flesh and Spirit in the Palestinian Jewish Sapiential Tradition,” 396. Frey seems to modify this claim in his conclusion on 403–4: while admitting that the opposition between “flesh” and “spirit” is not yet “fixed semantically,” he cautiously states that “if Paul knew about the negative usage of בשר or σὰρξ from the Jewish tradition, he could, then, form such an opposition drawing on his own experience of the life-giving spirit in his vision near Damascus.”

³⁸ Frey, “Flesh and Spirit in the Palestinian Jewish Sapiential Tradition,” 396 and 403.

(1) what *later* becomes an antithesis between “spirit” and “flesh,” and (2) what will become the antithesis between one kind of spirit and another, which in the Treatise on the Two Spirits (see below) is expressed on a cosmic, as well as human, scale.

Second, there are the righteous. In contrast to the children of Seth who are associated with the “spirit of flesh,” the righteous are called “a spiritual people” (עם רוח, i - 4Q417 2 i 16). In addition, they are addressed as the “chosen ones of the truth” (4Q418 69 ii 10) and are referred to as “wise ones of heart” (4Q418 81, 20). As those to be favored by God at the time of judgment, they are “sons of truth” (4Q416 1 10) and perhaps also “sons of heaven” (4Q416 1 12), the latter designation also referring to a group that includes angelic beings who serve as their model of behavior (4Q418 69 ii 12–13).³⁹ Finally, the “righteous one,” in contrast to what is said elsewhere in *Musar* about “the spirit of flesh” (4Q417 2 i 17–18), is regarded as capable of discerning “between good and evil” (4Q417 2 i 8; 4Q418 2 7).

While the references to distinguishing good from evil in *Musar* undergird the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, they should not be taken to mean that both groups only perform good and evil deeds, respectively.⁴⁰ *Musar* leaves no doubt that righteous ones can and do sin. For example, the addressee—in this case, the “understanding one”—is instructed on two occasions: “Do not overlook your transgressions” (תעבור אל פשעיכה; 4Q417 1 i 8, 14); he is instead to act “like a humble man” so that God’s anger will turn away and “he (God) will overlook your sins” (עבר על חטאותכה; l. 15). The righteous is in need of “forgiveness” (סליחה; l. 16). This idea comes close to Ben Sira who, as we have seen, makes no attempt to equate a social identity of being among the pious with the human state of sinfulness. Thus, while *Musar* does provide terminology that acknowledges the ambiguity of human experience within a social framework of distinct groups, the writer(s) did not explore this in terms of an anthropology. “Spirit” and “flesh” are interrelated on a collective scale, while how this reflects an understanding of human nature remains implicit.

The categorical distinction between the righteous and the wicked in *Musar* should not be taken to mean that no differentiation is made among the righteous. According to one passage (4Q418 55 8–10) human beings, presumably those righteous ones “who inherit truth” (l. 6), are distinguishable

³⁹ See Goff, *The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom in 4QInstruction*, 110–12 and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “‘Angels’ and ‘God’: Exploring the Limits of Early Jewish Monotheism”, in *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E. S. North (JSNTSS, 263; London: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), 45–70 (particularly 63–66).

⁴⁰ See, similarly, IQS IV 26, in which knowing between good and evil appears as an ideal, perhaps eschatological, state which, however, does not co-exist with the possibility, in the meantime, that the righteous can and do sin (IV 15–17a). See further below.

from one another according to their insight (שכלו) and splendor (הדרו; 1. 10). The writer claims that this sorting out is performed by the “angels of holiness” as they “honor one person more than the next...according to their knowledge” (1l. 8,10). This classification, which results in greater or less degrees of honor for members within the elect community, introduces the question of how this differentiation in insight is reflected or expressed in language about human nature. Again, however, *Musar* does not develop this distinction in human nature in relation to either anthropological or psychological dualism. Nonetheless, it does anticipate the more sustained interest in human nature attested in the Qumran *Community Rule*.⁴¹

Among the sapiential Dead Sea documents, the *Book of Mysteries* shares the interest of *Musar* in “the mystery of existence” (1Q27 1 i 2, 4; 4Q300 3 4). As this document is only extant in a small number of fragments of limited size, we cannot know the degree to which it shares the motifs that occur in *Musar*. At one point, the text does seem to distinguish between “one who does good and one who does evil” (1Q27 2 ii 4) similar to the stereotypical social categories used in Ben Sira and *1 Enoch* 91–105. The author refers, in addition, to “those born of iniquity” who will be shut up (1Q27 1 i 5), that is, the writer seems to attribute the principle of evil to a cosmic power. “Those born of iniquity” is, I think, not an expression that refers to human beings. The verb סגר (to “shut or lock up”) suggests an allusion to the offspring of the fallen angels and human women whose defiling union between heaven and earth, according to contemporary Enochic and other early Jewish apocalyptic traditions, resulted in the proliferation of evil on earth during the time of Noah. The angelic offspring, the giants, were punished by God, but await final destruction.⁴² While nothing preserved among the *Book of Mysteries* fragments mentions good angelic forces, the probable allusion here to trans-human evil beings implies a dualism between cosmic powers that becomes explicit in another form. The document projects ethical opposition between good and evil onto its categorical contrast between “light” and “darkness.” The clearest example of this occurs in the fragmentary reference to “the mysteries of light and the ways of darkness” (4Q299 5 2). Given the limited state of preservation of the *Book of Mysteries*, we do not know whether it originally contained any material that relates directly to human nature.

⁴¹ Specifically, this differentiation is picked up in parts of the *Community Rule* outside the Treatise on the Two Spirits; so esp. 1QS V 23–24//4Q261 1 2–6//4Q258 2 2–4 (see also 1QS VI 17, 22//4Q258 2 8; 7 20–21//4Q259 2 4; 8 19//4Q258 7 3; and 9 3, 14–15, 18//4Q259 3 10).

⁴² Cf. 1Q27 1 i 5 and, further, *1 En.* 10; 15–16; 89; *Jub.* 10. Concerning further allusions in the *Book of Mysteries* to the fallen angel or watcher tradition, see Armin Lange, “The Essene Position on Magic and Divination,” in *Legal Texts* (cf. bibliography in n. 2 above), 377–435 (particularly 405–6).

The Treatise on the Two Spirits (1QS III:13 – IV:26)

In what follows, the antitheses in the Treatise will be compared both with those in the documents discussed above and those in other writings from the Dead Sea materials with which it bears important affinities. Yet we cannot proceed on the assumption that the ideas of the Treatise were originated in reflections about the experience of the community that lived at Khirbet Qumran.⁴³ Instead, we have learned in recent years that the famous theological treatise preserved in 1QSerek ha-Yahad III:13–IV:26 was not a masterpiece initially composed from within the Qumran community for the Qumran community, and we have learned that it does not formally summarize or immediately reflect the group's ideology. First, among the twelve further manuscripts of the *Community Rule*, this treatise on the two spirits is only minimally preserved on two fragments of one manuscript, 4QSc (4Q257).⁴⁴ The physical evidence, therefore, may be enough at least to question the prominence of the Treatise for the community. Second, its essential features, including the antitheses, are expressed in vocabulary and ideas that come closer to those found in other sapiential compositions than what it shares with the literature that more unambiguously derives from the Qumran community.⁴⁵

It is appropriate, therefore, to interpret the Treatise on the Two Spirits as a document in its own right rather than as simply an extension of its literary context in the *Community Rule*. In and of itself, the Treatise marks a convergence and development of several of the polarizing oppositions encoun-

⁴³ Despite recognition that the Treatise departs formally from the remaining sections of the *Community Rule*, this assumption is held reflected in most of the early overviews of Qumran literature; for example, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 132–37; Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, Martin Goodman (3 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973–1987), III/1:381–86; Devorah Dimant, “Qumran Sectarian Literature”, in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. Michael E. Stone (CRINT 2/2; Van Gorcum: Assen and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 483–550 (particularly 497–502 and 533–36); and Michael A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community* (Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 93–103. On this basis, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor argued that the Treatise is the last, and theologically the most profound, layer of the *Community Rule*; see “La genèse littéraire de la Règle de la Communauté,” *RB* 76 (1969): 528–49, and Jean Pouilly, *La Règle de la Communauté. Son évolution littéraire* (Cahiers de la Revue Biblique 17; Paris: Gabalanda, 1976).

⁴⁴ See Sarianna Metso, *The Textual Development of the Qumran Community Rule* (STDJ 21; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 31–36. Moreover, 4Q258–259 probably did not contain the passage, as they open with the passage parallel to 1QS col v 1.

⁴⁵ See, conveniently, Armin Lange and Hermann Lichtenberger, “Qumran,” in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 28 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 45–79; Hartmut Stegemann, *The Library from Qumran: On the Essenes, Qumran, John the Baptist, and Jesus* (Leiden: Brill and Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 108–10; and Frey, “Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought,” 279–80.

tered in the documents considered above and other compositions preserved among the Dead Sea literature. While different ways of conceptualizing dualism are interwoven in the Treatise,⁴⁶ the structure of the Treatise progresses from one sort to another. This progression, based on the Treatise's antitheses, may be briefly outlined as follows. After the lengthy superscript (III 13–15a) and a brief hymn about creation (III 15b–18), the first exposition is concerned with two spirits, also designated “the Prince of Light” and “the Angel of Darkness” (III 18–IV 1). This portrait of cosmic opposition⁴⁷ is followed by classification, in the vein of ethical dualism, of vices and virtues that characterize two sorts of human beings (IV 2–14). The third exposition is then concerned with human activities as they reflect the influence on human nature by the two spirits referred to in column iii (IV 15–26). In the end, these contrasts—operative in the cosmic, ethical, and psychological spheres—are inextricably bound up with and modify one another. Whereas the ethical antithesis could stand on its own as a social classification of human beings, the interrelation between the cosmological and anthropological oppositions demonstrates that the Treatise is informed by a more complex frame of understanding.

Each of the antitheses in the Treatise on the Two Spirits finds at least some precedent in the contemporary Jewish literature. First, in the cosmic sphere (III 18 – IV 1), the predetermined opposition between two angels with separate dominions over light and darkness crystallizes and intensifies Ben Sira's more general emphasis that God has structured the universe from the beginning to consist of pairs, both good and bad (Sir 42:24–25; 33:15). With respect to personified cosmological powers, the most notable analogies may be observed in the Aramaic *Vision of Amram* (4Q543–547, 4Q548?)⁴⁸ and the *War Rule*. In the *Vision of Amram* two angels who together have authority over all humanity are in conflict with each other to gain control over the patriarch. The angel associated with darkness carries the name “Melki-resha’,” while no name is extant for the other who speaks

⁴⁶ So especially Hermann Lichtenberger, *Studien zum Menschenbild in den Texten der Qumrangemeinde* (SUNT 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 123–42.

⁴⁷ The language is not completely dualistic. For example, whereas the text refers to a group of spirits that comprise the entourage of the Angel of Darkness and cause the sons of light to stumble, no contrasting host of beings is associated with “the Angel of his Truth” who, with “the God of Israel” comes to their aid (1QS III 24–25).

⁴⁸ On the fragments see Paul J. Kobelski, *Melchizedeq and Melchireša’* (CBQMS 10; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1981) and their publication by Emile Puech, *Qumran Cave 4. XXII: Textes araméens, première partie: 4Q529–549* (DJD, 31; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001). In addition, see the *Testament of Qahat* (4Q542) where such oppositions may be attested as well, though less clearly evidenced due to the document's fragmentary state: “sons of wickedness” (1 ii 8 – this may imply the designation “sons of truth/righteousness”) and the mention of “light” and “darkness” (2 11–12); see particularly Emile Puech, “Le Testament de Qahat en araméen de la grotte 4 (4QTQah),” *RevQ* 15 (1991): 23–54.

with the patriarch and is associated with light (נְהִיָּא; cf. 4Q544 1 10–14). Since the patriarch is apparently asked to choose between the two (4Q544 1 12), the document does not seem to envisage the simultaneous influence of both cosmic powers. The patriarch, as humanity as a whole (divided into “sons of light” and “sons of darkness”⁴⁹), exists in only one sphere or another, and, unlike the Treatise on the Two Spirits, the opposing angelic powers are not projected onto or mirrored in human nature. A similar framework is adopted in the *War Rule* (as in 1QM), which envisions an eschatological conflict pitting “the sons of light” against “the sons of darkness.” The contrast between the cosmic powers is, however, not consistently worked through. On one level, analogous to “the Prince of Lights” in the Treatise, Michael “the mighty angel” (perhaps also called “the Prince of Light” (1QM XIII:10)) can appear as the implicit opponent of “the commander of the dominion of wickedness,” that is, Belial (cf. XVII 5b–8a).⁵⁰ On another level and unlike the Treatise, though, Belial’s opponent is none other than God, so that both have their “lot” (e.g. God - XIII 5; XVII 7; Belial - XIII 2, 4, 11–12) and are cursed (Belial) and blessed (God), respectively (XIII 4, 7). Here, though, the document does not preserve anything that relates antithetical contrasts to either human nature or the lot of any individual.⁵¹

Second, in the ethical sphere (IV 2–14), the catalogue of vices and virtues in the Treatise adapts the widespread dualistic pattern that we have encountered in other forms in Ben Sira, *Epistle of Enoch*, and *Musar le-Mevin*. The designations, which correspond to contrasts expressed along ethical lines, are similar to those used in *Vision of Amram* and the *War Rule*. The righteous are called “sons of truth” (IV 6), “sons of light” (III 25), and “sons of righteousness” (III 20, 22). It is as an instruction for these that the Treatise has been composed, much like the *Musar* is addressed to one who understands. The other group is designated the “sons of perversity” (III 21).⁵² This socio-ethical dualism is coordinated with cosmology

⁴⁹ See 4Q544 3 1 and 4Q548 1 9–15. For a recent discussion of the dualistic divisions of humanity in 4Q548, cf. J. Verheyden, “The Fate of the Righteous and the Cursed at Qumran and in the Gospel of Matthew,” in *Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Biblical Tradition*, ed. Florentino García Martínez (BETL, 168; Leuven: Leuven University Press and Peeters, 2003), 427–49 (particularly 433–39).

⁵⁰ Concerning Michael’s ambiguous position as the opponent to Belial in the *War Rule*, which is reflected in the editorial activity of copyists, see Jean Duhaime, “Dualistic Reworking in the Scrolls from Qumran,” *CBQ* 49 (1987), 32–56 (particularly 43–46).

⁵¹ The same holds for 11Q13 (= 11QM*Melchizedek*), which perhaps reflects the influence of *Vision of Amram*: Melchizedek is portrayed as in charge over those belonging to “his lot” in the battle against Belial.

⁵² Interestingly, the designation “sons of darkness” does not occur in the Treatise which, instead refers to “the spirits of darkness” (III 25, in the phrase “the spirits of light and of darkness”),

through the contrasting expressions “paths of light” and “paths of darkness” (III 20–21) that are described in detail in the virtues and vices.

Third, the Treatise’s reflection on two spirits in human nature means that a clearcut classification in the present between two sorts of people is not something that is fully transparent (IV 15–26). The admission that “the sons of light” can stumble (III 24) is elaborated on into an understanding of the human as the *locus* of conflict between “divisions” that God has appointed until the end (IV 15–20a). Here, it is deeds, not the human being, that are as a whole assigned to one of the two divisions. Humans each have an “inheritance,” whether it is “great or small” (from one of the two divisions) and, therefore, the righteous are implicitly capable of straying. A comparison with Ben Sira and *1 Enoch* 91–105 illustrates this point. As we have seen, Ben Sira admits the possibility that someone can be on “two paths” at once (Sir. 2:12), but does not pursue the implications of this for the *anthropos*; instead, life on a double-track is ultimately presented as a problem describing the condition of sinners, as is also the case of those who are “double-hearted” (e.g. Sir 1:28; *1 En.* 91:4). Any goodness, then, on the part of sinners is for Ben Sira only apparent, and ultimately this is explained in terms of hypocrisy or involves a wrong understanding of goodness (such as a reliance on wealth). By contrast, the duality of paths within a human being is developed in the Treatise of Two Spirits, which in the first instance seems to focus on what happens within the “sons of righteousness.”⁵³ Here, a double life (so to speak) is not so much the aberrant way of “sinners,” but is the essential makeup of human nature itself; the Treatise, after all, lays claim to knowledge in relation to “all the sons of men” (III 13). Whenever goodness occurs, whether within “the sons of righteousness” or “of perversity,” it is real, just as badness, whenever it occurs, is real among these groups as well.⁵⁴ All human beings, whether socially on the inside or out-

which come under the dominion of “the Angel of Darkness.” It is these who “make the sons of light stumble” (III 24).

⁵³ The ultimately hortatory character of the Treatise as a document for “the sons of light” should not be missed, as the theoretical possibility that “the sons of perversity” can do good is not explored.

⁵⁴ A remarkably similar interiorizing of dualism between light and darkness may be found in the so-called “horoscope” texts of 4Q186 and 4Q561, composed in Hebrew and Aramaic respectively. These texts describe in detail the physical features of a human being (or, more accurately, a type of human being), features that are coordinated with the precise configuration of stars at the moment of birth. The parts of lightness and darkness add up to a total of nine parts, the odd number being a deliberate way of ensuring that the parts will not be equally distributed between the two spheres. Each person, though implicitly capable of doing both good and bad, is ultimately dominated by light or darkness. This is consistent with 1QS IV 15b–16 (“every performance of their deeds is in their divisions, according to the inheritance of the man, whether much or little, for all times of the ages”) and IV 24b–25a (“and according to the inheritance of the man in the truth, he will be righteous and thus hate injustice; and according to his share in the lot of injustice, he

side of the righteous community, comprise the battleground where the conflict between opposing spirits is carried out. In the Treatise, then, the boundaries between wickedness and righteousness are not ultimately physically or socially delineated. The possible charge of hypocrisy against sinners found in documents like Ben Sira and *1 Enoch* 91–105 is absent. In the Treatise on the Two Spirits, it has given way to a polarizing framework that explains inconsistent behavior as an inevitability for human beings.

For all its antithetical terminology, the Treatise's treatment of the notion of a righteous community is not as straightforward as one might expect. Were a cosmic dualism simply a projection of an ethical opposition between insiders and outsiders, then the designations "sons of righteousness" and "sons of perversity" would claim to be descriptive of the real ethics of these groups. They would be those who, respectively, come under the respective dominions of the Prince of Lights and Angel of Aarkness. As we have seen, however, the Treatise resists such a simplistic scheme. In principle, the author(s) shared with other Jewish writings the view that the righteous can and do fail. In the instruction this admission is explained in terms of an eschatological framework, according to which the present age, before the time of God's visitation against evil, is one of uncertainty.⁵⁵ While the hortatory character of the Treatise does not lead to such an emphasis, the logic of its argument recognizes that the "sons of righteousness" remain in the experience of sin, iniquity, and guilt, a fact that is assumed rather than referred to, as it were, in the subjective (i.e. "if such should ever happen..."). Similar to *Musar* (but more clearly and emphatically), the opposition between one kind of spirit and another occurs on a cosmic level, a level that is also located within the human being. When God brings an end to evil at the eschatological time of visitation, the "spirit of injustice" within the person will be removed from "the innermost framework of human flesh" to be replaced by purity and "the spirit of truth" (IV 18–21). The "flesh" itself re-emerges cleansed and purified from divine judgment.⁵⁶

It is eschatology that ultimately provides the framework within which unambiguous group identity can be retained. To be sure, the Treatise maintains the notion of group identity in the present on the basis of an ethical

will be wicked in it and thus abhor the truth, for in equal parts God has established them until the determined time and the making of something new"). Concerning the different emphases in IQS, on the one hand, and in 4Q186 and 4Q561, on the other, see Lichtenberger, *Studien zum Menschenbild in den Texten der Qumrangemeinde*, 147–48.

⁵⁵ Lichtenberger, *Studien zum Menschenbild in den Texten der Qumrangemeinde*, 191, observes a collective parallel between the occasional slain among "the sons of light" by the forces of Belial (cf. IQM XVI 15; XVII 1; 4Q491 10 ii 11) and the failings held possible for "the sons of light" in IQS III 21–25. This holds true, unless IQS III 21–25 anticipates the reflections on human nature presented in IV 15–26.

⁵⁶ Hence there is no categorical opposition in the Treatise between "spirit" and "flesh."

distinction; the sons of light still remain sons of light because they are helped by the God of Israel and “the Angel of truth” (III 24–25). But the writer is deeply aware that experience does not correspond to the straightforward divisions of the world into two realms of influence, realms that are socially expressed in the bounded existence of a righteous community. The reflections here on human nature are not satisfied with characterizing the experience of the righteous as one of awareness of sin and seeking of forgiveness when it occurs (as in Ben Sira and *Musar*). The polarizing cosmology, insofar as it is interiorized into the human being, marks an attempt to take continuing ambivalence seriously. It might be thought that the physiognomic texts of 4Q186 and 4Q561 provide an analogy to this, since the nine parts of a person are each assigned to either a “house of light” or “house of darkness” in accordance with birth times.⁵⁷ However, this combination of psychological and cosmic antitheses is not accompanied by an ethical frame of reference in these manuscripts. Thus the great contribution of the Treatise of the Two Spirits in the *Community Rule* consists in its explicit merging of cosmic, psychological, and ethical dualities, allowing them to modify the one-sided force of the other. They not only modify one another: they are only a temporary reality to be wiped away at the appointed time of God’s visitation when the end of injustice will completely eliminate the conflict between the two spirits whose conflict is located in the hearts of human beings.

What sort of community does the Treatise presuppose? It would be difficult to imagine that the polarizing classifications in the Treatise were originally formulated for a group undergoing simply a social crisis of identity in which one group is reflecting on how and why it contrasts from another. Likewise, it seems hard to posit a social setting of poverty behind the document. Rather, the Treatise presupposes an established, though not necessarily “sectarian,” community and takes the luxury of indulging in the sort of reflection that takes a certain degree of vulnerability for granted. This is not a community “fighting its corner” against the odds of cosmic invasions for fear of destruction; the instruction is, rather, one for a community that has had a history of ups and downs, that has had the sort of longevity and social stability as a group that can contemplate such tough questions.

If the Treatise was not composed by anyone at the Qumran community for that community, nevertheless we may note that, within the literary context of the *Community Rule* from Cave 1, it has acquired a function analogous to its original purpose. Unlike the following block of materials in the document (V 1 – X 5), language of social and physical separation between people, the good and the bad, is absent. Its relation to the preceding material

⁵⁷ See n. 54 above.

in columns I 1 – III 12 seems closer. In these early columns of 1QS strong cosmic boundaries between insiders and outsiders are erected, formalized through a liturgy that curses those who belong to Belial's lot (II 5–9). Despite these boundaries, which seem to draw special lines around the community, the section allows for the possibility that someone who finds himself within the community may falsely bless himself “in his heart, saying ‘Peace be with me.’” (II 13). The text says that such a person's spirit is to be destroyed and that he is to go without forgiveness (II 14–15); he is no different from those who belong to Belial's lot (II 17), and, just as those on the outside of the community, he is to become under the community's curse (II 18; cf. II 10). This is as far as the Qumran community could go in terms of the group's own experience. Here the problem of sin among members of the community is described in terms of hypocrisy, that is, the person should know better than to “bless himself” if he has done something wrong. Yet in venturing into the private experience of the individual, the compilers of this stage of the document were entering vulnerable territory of the unknown marked by a degree of uncertainty, despite all efforts otherwise to draw socially definable boundaries of light and darkness. That this may not have been acceptable to contemplate for all members of the community is suggested by the absence of this section in those manuscripts that begin with material parallel to 1QS V (4Q258; 4Q261).

Similar to the *War Rule*, the stark contrast between God and the dominion of Belial, between God's lot and the lot of Belial, comes in the opening columns of 1QS close to a duality that involves God. In its placement after this section, the Treatise functions in its new literary setting to reassert an understanding in which God is not drawn into any of the contrasts or antitheses *per se*, but exists above them. From this vantage point, dualism is thus “kicked downstairs” and, in light of the uncertainties and discrepancies in human experience, makes ambiguities conceptually more manageable.⁵⁸ God has all things under control, despite experience that may dictate otherwise. And this control will manifest itself when by “the glorious wisdom of God” (IV 18) evil will be completely destroyed. One day the elect shall be able to “walk in wisdom” (IV 24) just as God has determined from the very beginning.

⁵⁸ Frey, “Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought,” 301–2, notes that the Qumran community's interest in the Treatise was not its instruction about the “two spirits” (which shows little sign of having been taken up in specifically Qumran compositions), but rather the Treatise's teaching on the opposition between God and Belial. Our reading of the Treatise as an addition that deliberately modifies the foregoing dualism of the earlier columns, by contrast, reflects on a literary reading of 1QS, without requiring that this emphasis be found as such in literature composed by the Qumran community.

Conclusion

The survey of sapiential literature composed during the second century B.C.E. has shown a wide variety of approaches to antitheses. Oppositional structures of thought played an important role in crystallizing the identities of groups that saw themselves in religious conflict with either the conventionally wicked or with specific opponents. Most often, as in all the documents discussed here, language of opposition expressed itself in relation to the ethical distinction between good and bad. Less often, but not uncommon, is a cosmological polarity that contrasts God and/or a prominent angelic being (such as “the Prince of Lights,” Melchizedek, Michael) with Belial or a prominent angelic leader (such as Melkireša’ or “the Angel of Darkness”). The least common of antithetical structures in the documents considered has had to do with interior dimensions of human nature. We have observed here that Ben Sira and *Musar* do broach the subject but have not followed through with a translation of their ideas to this level. The Treatise of the Two Spirits, however, does explore human nature *per se*, and initially may have arisen within the context of relative stability in a religious community. Thus the instruction on the Two Spirits in the *Community Rule*, in its blend of several forms of polarizing conflict, may be said to have originally functioned in a way that is analogous to its position and use in the *Community Rule* from Cave 1. Its theological anthropology, which envisions the human being as the battleground between cosmic forces, is an interiorization of a socio-religious conflict that, given the strict ideals of the community, could no longer be circumscribed by physical boundaries. The internalized socio-religious conflict does not at this stage, however, threaten the community with internal “de-combustion.” The Treatise provided its original community, and subsequently the Qumran community, with a theological framework that enabled these groups to come to terms with discrepancies between the ideology and identity they claimed for themselves on the one hand and realities of what they experienced on the other.

Philip S. Alexander

The Dualism of Heaven and Earth in Early Jewish Literature and its Implications

Varieties of Dualism

Dualism is one of those terms employed by scholars, like mysticism or magic or religion, that everyone complains is “fuzzy” and hard to define, but that no one seems able totally to avoid or to replace with a less problematic substitute. There are many types of dualism, which can shade imperceptibly into each other. We have what might be called ethical dualism—the idea that the world is governed by two competing powers or principles, one good and one evil. This is what historians of religion normally think of when they talk of dualism. But there is also temporal dualism involving an opposition or contrast between this age (usually seen as marked by trials and tribulations) and an age to come (marked by joy and peace). There is epistemological dualism—the idea that reality is of two kinds, one of which is accessible to the human intellect and the other not. There is, finally, spatial dualism in which the cosmos is divided into two sharply contrasting or antithetical regions or realms. The classic example of this is the dualism between earth and heaven, and it is this cosmological dualism that I want to explore in the present paper.

I offer the paper as an essay in the history of ideas, and as such my analysis is predicated on the assumption that the sources I will analyze, despite their often exuberant and anarchic language, embody rational and coherent systems of thought. I will investigate a theme in the intellectual tradition of Judaism in late antiquity, concerned to trace not so much the literary or historical relationships between texts as the logical connections between the ideas they express. I take it for granted that the people who framed these ideas were as rational as I am, and as capable of seeing their implications.

Heaven as a “Parallel Universe”

That heaven and earth are opposed to each other as contrasting regions is a commonplace of early cosmology. Heaven is seen as a remote region above the earth in which the gods or divine beings dwell and which is not normally accessible to humans living on earth. The inaccessibility of heaven is implicit in many sources, but often it seems to be related simply to

distance or to the notion that if humans tried to enter they would be physically restrained by the gods or the angels. They would be committing a trespass, but there was no fundamental reason why they could not, in principle, enter. In some texts, however, heaven is seen as ontologically a different place from earth, another dimension, a parallel universe obeying different physical laws, which humans by their very nature cannot enter, at least as they are currently physically constituted. This idea is comparatively rare in Jewish literature, at least in explicitly articulated form, but it occurs in a number of sources. It marks an unusual level of reflection and sophistication, and it has important theological implications, which have often been missed by historians, but of which the tradition itself seems to have been aware.

Let me spell out this idea out a little more boldly. As I have already indicated, a mild dualism between heaven and earth is standard in the cosmologies of antiquity. Heaven is the abode of the gods, earth the abode of humans. Though the gods as superior beings have a right to enter the human realm, humans have no right to intrude on the privacy of the gods and will be punished if they presume to do so, just as a commoner would be severely dealt with if he wandered uninvited into the palace of an earthly king. In this cosmology there is no ontological discontinuity between earth and heaven: both belong, so to speak, to the same space-time continuum. In the texts in which I am interested, there is a sophisticated attempt to re-imagine heaven as existing in a different dimension, as being a realm where different physical laws apply, where things can happen that defy the laws operating in this world. In this scenario there is a sharp discontinuity between earth and heaven, a clear ontological boundary that can be crossed in either direction only with extreme difficulty. When it is crossed, as happens from time to time, the event has cosmic significance. This view, as I have already hinted, carries profound theological implications: it challenges the scholarly consensus that people in antiquity for the most part could only conceive of a primitive two- or three-decker universe, in which heaven is simply an upper storey built on top of earth. It anticipates, albeit in rather mythical language, some of the profoundest thinking of the Middle Ages on heaven as a “place” qualitatively different from earth, and not simply as a region located spatially “above” it.

The earliest clear attestation in Jewish literature of the idea that heaven is a parallel universe is found in *1 Enoch* 14:8–25. There we have an extraordinary description of God’s celestial palace:

And in the vision thus it appeared to me: Behold, clouds called me in the vision, and mists summoned me. Shooting-stars and lightnings urged me on and whirled me along, and in my vision winds gave me wing, and lifted me up and carried me into

heaven. And I went in till I came near a wall built of hailstones, with tongues of fire surrounding it; and they began to terrify me. And I went into the tongues of fire and approached a large house built of hailstones; and the walls of the house were like paving stones, all of snow. Its lower floors were of snow; its upper floors were like shooting-stars and lightnings, and in the midst of them were fiery Cherubim, and their heaven was like water. And fire was burning round the walls, and the doors were ablaze with fire. And I entered that house, and it was hot as fire and cold as snow; and there was nothing to sustain life in it. Fear overwhelmed me, and trembling seized me, and, shaking and trembling, I fell down.

And I saw in my vision, and behold, another door lay open before me, and [another] house larger than the former, and it was entirely built of tongues of fire. And it surpassed the other house so totally in glory, splendor and size that I am unable to describe to you its glory and size. Its lower storey was of fire, its upper storey of lightnings and shooting-stars, and its roof of blazing fire. And I looked and saw a lofty throne, and its appearance was like ice-crystals; and there was a wheel like the [disc of] the shining sun, and a choir (?) of Cherubim. And from beneath the throne streams of blazing fire flowed out, and I was unable to look. The Great Glory sat on it, and his garment was brighter than the sun, and whiter than any snow. And no angel was able to enter this house, or look on his face, because of the splendor and glory; and no flesh was able to look at him. A fire blazed round him, and a great fire stood in front of him, and no one approached him. All round ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, and his every word was a deed. And the most holy angels who were near to him do not leave him by night or by day, nor do they depart from him. As for me, till then I had been prostrate on my face, trembling. And the Lord called me with his own mouth and said to me: "Come here, Enoch, and hear my word." And one of the holy angels came to me, raised me up, stood me on my feet and brought me to the door; and I bowed down my face.

The most prominent element of the heavenly world in this text is fire. Why fire? The answer might appear obvious. There are various passages in the Hebrew Bible associating God with fire or using fire to symbolize in some way the divine.¹ But I suspect there is more to it than this: none of these passages, at least none that predates *1 Enoch* 14, seems capable of generating this sophisticated vision of a fiery heaven.² The prominence of fire may go back to simple observation: the heaven above us is the abode

¹ See, e.g., Exod 19:18; 24:17; Deut 4:24; 9:3; Isa 10:17; 29:6; 30:27; and 33:14.

² The most obvious parallel is Dan 7. Dan 7, however, is later than *1 Enoch* 14, and the parallelism is in any case not all that strong. *1 Enoch* 14 probably owes something to Ezek 1:4–28: note esp. ver. 22, "a firmament like the appearance of ice" (*raqi'a ke'ein haqerah*), which, in the context of the references to the fieriness of the Merkabah (vers 4, 13, 27), introduces a paradoxical note. However, the relationship with Ezek 1 is not as close as is sometimes supposed. Ezekiel does not say that the firmament *was* ice, only that it *resembled* ice, and Ezek 1 and *1 Enoch* 14 are poles apart theologically. Ezek 1 is fundamentally about God's immanence, his presence in the world: God comes to Ezekiel by the River Chebar. *1 Enoch* 14 is about God's transcendence, his dwelling in the inaccessible heights of the universe. See the careful discussion in George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch* 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 259–61.

of the fiery sun and stars; it is observably a fiery region, an empyrean. It is also possible that our author held, like Heraclitus, that fire is the finest, purest, and most spiritual of substances. Heraclitus, possibly, like our author, influenced by Persian thought,³ regarded fire as divine. He seems to have equated it with *aither*. Souls originate in it and return to it—a line of thought developed later in Stoicism. Fire, for Heraclitus, has cosmogonic significance; it is the primary stuff of the universe.⁴ I would suggest that it is not too fanciful to postulate similar cosmological beliefs behind our Enochic text, beliefs that implicitly relate heaven to our world, but at the same time define it as utterly different. On this view *I Enoch* 14 should be seen as more scientific than poetic. It is describing heaven in terms of a binary opposition between two primary elements and two primary forces. The primary elements are fire and its antithesis, water. The primary forces are heat and its antithesis, cold. It is the interplay of these elements and these forces that has created our world. Air could be regarded as an exhalation of water under the influence of heat (cf. evaporation), and earth as a solidification of water under the influence of cold (cf. the formation of ice). Ideas like these were well known among the pre-Socratics, and I see no reason to suppose that they could not equally have circulated in the Jewish “scientific” tradition in the late Persian and early Greek periods as well.

These ideas emerge unmistakably in the later Jewish scientific tradition in that most remarkable of early Jewish cosmogonies, the *Sefer Yeşirah*. According the *Sefer Yeşirah* (11–15), there are three primary elements in the world: the most fundamental of these is air, with the other two, water and fire, being derived from it, the “Spirit of the Living God” being the creative force that acts upon them:⁵

Ten Sefirot:

One. Spirit of the Living God.

Two. Air [ruah] from Spirit [ruah]: he engraved and hewed out in it the twenty-two fundamental letters: three mothers, seven double and twelve simple, and each of them has the same spirit.

³ See Martin L. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), especially 170–76; Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 159–61.

⁴ G.S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), especially 306–65, on fragments 16, 30, 31, 36, 64, 65, 90.

⁵ The text of *Sefer Yeşirah* is highly problematic and occurs in a variety of recensions. I have simplified it a little without losing any of the substance. See Itamar Gruenwald, “A Preliminary Critical Edition of the *Sefer Yezira*,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 1 (1971): 144–5.

Three. Water from Air [ruah]: he engraved and hewed out in it chaos and disorder, mud and mire. He made it⁶ into a kind of seed-bed; he raised it as a kind of wall; he wove it into a kind of roof. He poured snow over it and it became earth, as Scripture says: “He said to the snow, ‘Be earth!’” (Job 37:6).

Four. Fire from Water: he engraved and hewed out in it the Throne of Glory, the Ofannim, the Serafim, the Holy Creatures, and the ministering angels, as Scripture says, “God makes winds his angels, and fiery flames his ministers” (Ps 104:4).⁷

It would take us too far out of our way to try and unravel the complexities of this passage, which would have been thoroughly at home in the thought-world of the pre-Socratics, but a number of points will help to advance our present discussion. First, unlike the cosmogony that I suggest stands behind *I Enoch* 14, the primary element in *Sefer Yeṣirah* is air, probably because it is the one closest to the creative force, the “Spirit of the Living God.” The derivation of water from air may be based on a recognition of the principle of condensation, and the surprising derivation of fire from water may involve some understanding of the process of evaporation. Second, note the transformation of water into earth through freezing: God pours “snow” (cold) over water and tells it to become “earth.” And finally, note the mono-elemental character of heaven: it is totally hewn out of fire. Heaven here belongs to the primary world of the primordial elements. I would suggest that similar ideas lie behind *I Enoch* 14. There heaven is not mono-elemental, but contains *all* the elements and forces that underlie our world, but the difference is that while in our world these elements and forces are mingled and blended and softened into a diverse but stable unity, in heaven they exist juxtaposed in their raw primordial, unmediated simplicity. Heaven is the world behind our world, the ground of its being, but it is an utterly different place from earth. On earth water or ice cannot be set next to fire: the one will overcome the other. In heaven, however, these antithetical elements stand eternally juxtaposed. Heaven is a totally paradoxical, topsy-turvy world where the terrestrial laws of nature do not apply.

There is another intriguing indication in *I Enoch* 14 that heaven belongs to a different dimension. Three domains are clearly delineated. First, Enoch approaches a wall built of ice and fire. He passes through this and approaches a house made of ice. He enters this house and inside it he finds another house. Approaching its door, he looks in and sees an awesome vision of God’s celestial throne. This inner house is God’s sanctum, and it is represented as the most resplendent part of the whole complex structure,

⁶ I translate this and the following plural suffixes as referring back to *mayim*, not to “mud and mire.”

⁷ The remaining six *Sefirot* are the cardinal directions of space: up, down, north, south, east, and west.

but paradoxically it is larger than the outer house. This is patently impossible according to terrestrial laws: a larger area or volume cannot be contained within a smaller. The author of this passage in *1 Enoch* must surely have known this. He is trying to find ways of articulating the view that heaven is in a different dimension, or is a parallel universe, to the earth.

The descriptions of heaven in Jewish apocalyptic that survive from the period immediately following *1 Enoch* 14, which probably dates from the third century B.C.E., do not noticeably pick up this idea. Heaven is full of marvellous sights, but that it operates under different physical laws from earth is not stressed. Interesting is the reworking of *1 Enoch* 14's vision of the heavenly temple in the *Similitudes* (*1 Enoch* 71), dating from the first century C.E. This reflects the general impression one gets from reading *1 Enoch* 14 that heaven is predominantly a fiery place, but loses some of the nuance of the opposing elements and the paradoxicality. *1 Enoch* 71 betrays the influence of another highly influential vision of heaven, Dan 7:9–10 (note the reference to the rivers of fire), which is also later than *1 Enoch* 14 and seems to have established as standard the view that heaven is a mono-elemental universe composed solely of fire. The paradox, however, resurfaces in the *Heikhalot* literature of late Talmudic times. This literature contains some of the most detailed descriptions of heaven to be found in the whole of early Jewish literature, and their general thrust is to depict heaven as an alien and hostile world, qualitatively different from anything we know on earth. The language is heavily mythic and symbolic, but this seems to me to be the message that it is attempting to convey.

The texts stress the awesomeness and strangeness of heaven with a new detail and intensity. Take, for example, the description of the Gatekeepers of the seventh celestial palace in *Heikhalot Rabbati* 17–18 (§§213–215):⁸

At the gate of the seventh palace all the Mighty stand, wrathful, ruthless, strong, harsh, terrible and frightening, taller than mountains and sharper than peaks. Their bows are strung and ready before them; their swords are sharpened and in their hands. Bolts of lightning shoot forth from the balls of their eyes, sparks of fire from their nostrils and fiery torches from their mouths. They are clad in helmets and coats of mail, and spears and javelins hang upon their arms.

Their horses are horses of darkness, horses of the shadow of death, horses of gloom, horses of blood, horses of hail, horses of iron, horses of mist. Their horses on which they ride stand beside mangers of fire full of juniper coals, and eat fiery coals from the mangers—forty bushels of coal at one gulp! The capacity of each horse's mouth is equal to three of the mangers of Caesarea.

Rivers of fire run beside their mangers, and all the horses drink from them a quantity equivalent to the capacity of the water-channel in the Kidron Valley, which carries off

⁸ Peter Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1981), 92.

and contains all the rainwater of all Jerusalem. And there was above their heads a cloud dripping blood—above their heads and the heads of their horses. It is the sign and measure of the Gatekeepers of the seventh palace and of the Gatekeepers of each of the palaces.

Though there is a degree of paradoxicality expressed here (how can the horses be at once fiery and frosty?), the overwhelming impression given is that the primary constituent of the heavenly world is fire. That the angels are made up of fire is easily grounded in Scripture (e.g. Ps 104:4, though this passage could equally be used to prove that they are made of air), but I suspect the Heikhalot mystics chose fire not only because by their day a fiery heaven was traditional, but also because they believed that fire is the most tenuous and spiritual of substances. The implication is that heaven is a mono-elemental universe, constructed, unlike the world we know, of only one substance, fire, and that makes it a very strange and hostile place indeed.

The Heikhalot mystics put a new emphasis on the inaccessibility of heaven. This notion is conveyed in a mixture both of mythic and non-mythic language. In non-mythic, cosmological terms, it is expressed, for example, by the idea that as the adept ascends to heaven he finds that the distances between the various stages increase exponentially, so that the nearer he apparently gets to his goal, the further in fact he still has to go!⁹ The inaccessibility of heaven is also conveyed mythically in terms of resistance: the ascending adept finds himself confronted by angels whose precise business is to keep him out. When he reaches the seventh heaven, he has to penetrate the seven concentric palaces before he can appear before the Throne of Glory. But at the gates of these seven palaces stand armed guardian angels,

⁹ This is the meaning of the Midrash on the Dimensions of the Heavens, a version of which is found in Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah 13a. Having stated that the distance from earth to the first heaven is “a journey of five hundred years” (cf. the mere seventy years allotted to the normal human lifespan), and that the depth of each of the successive heavens, and the gaps between them, are also, individually, “a journey of five hundred years,” the description reaches the Merkabah itself: “Above [the seven heavens] are the Hayyot. The hooves of the Hayyot are equal to all of them together; the ankles of the Hayyot are equal to all of them together; the lower legs of the Hayyot are equal to all of them together,” and so on up to the horns of the Hayyot, and then through the various parts of the Throne of Glory, which the Hayyot carry, up to “the King, the Living and Eternal God who dwells above them.” In other words each successive distance is equivalent to all the previous distances, measuring from the earth, put together. The distances increase exponentially! See further, *Seder Rabba diBere'shit* 43–44 (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§778–7); *Re'uyot Yehezqel*, ed. Itamar Gruenwald, *Temirin* 1 (1972): 121, and *Massekhet Heikhalot*, ed. Adolph Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, vol. 2 (3rd ed., Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1967), 41. A similar point is made in the Midrash on the Heavenly Bridges in *3 En. 22C: 1–3* (see Alexander's note *ad loc.* in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2 [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983], 305).

who must be placated in some way, if he is to get through.¹⁰ The ascent is not impossible, but it is unspeakably arduous and dangerous.

The Heikhalot texts also stress the paradoxicality of the heavenly world. This is a consistent motif of their descriptions of heaven, and it is expressed in variety of ways, some of them intriguingly parallel to *1 Enoch* 14. Thus there seems to be an implication that the seven concentric palaces grow progressively larger as one moves inwards!¹¹ A remarkable passage from *3 Enoch* 42 (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §926) hammers home the idea that in heaven terrestrial laws of nature do not apply:

Rabbi Ishmael said: Metatron said to me:

Come and I will show you

where water is suspended in the height of *Raqia'*;

where fire burns in the midst of hail;

where lightnings flash in the midst of mountains of snow;

where thunders rumble in the highest heights;

where flame blazes in the midst of burning fire;

where sounds [lit. voices] can be heard above thunder and earthquake.

I went with him, and, taking me by his hand, he bore me upon his wings and showed me all these things.

I saw water suspended in the height of the heaven of *'Arabot*, through the power of the name, *Yah*, I Am That I Am (Exod. 3:14; 15:2)...

I saw fire, snow and hailstones enclosed one within the other, without one destroying the other, through the power of the name A Consuming Fire, as it is written, "For YHWH your God is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24).

I saw lightnings flashing in the midst of mountains of snow, without being quenched, through the power of the name *Yah*, YHWH, the Everlasting Rock, as it is written, "*Yah*, YHWH is the everlasting Rock" (Isa. 26:4).

I saw thunders and sounds [lit. voices] roaring in the midst of flames of fire, without being overwhelmed, through the power of the name Great God Almighty, as it is written, "I am God Almighty" (Gen. 17:1).

I saw flames of fire flaring and burning in the midst of blazing fire without being swallowed up, through the power of the name A Hand upon the Throne of *Yah*, as it is written, "And he said: A hand upon the throne of *Yah*" (Exod. 17:16; 18:19).

I saw rivers of fire in the midst of rivers of water, and rivers of water in the midst of rivers of fire, through the power of the name He keeps the Peace, as it is written, "He keeps the peace in his heights" (Job 25:2).

He keeps peace between fire and water, between hail and fire, between wind and cloud, between tremors and comets.

¹⁰ *Heikhalot Rabbati* 17–22 (Schäfer, *Synopse* §§206–39).

¹¹ The idea is nowhere, to my knowledge, expressed in so many words, but it seems to me implied. Each of the successive palaces becomes grander than the one before. It is also implied if we combine the Midrash on the Dimensions of the Heavens (see note 9) with the idea of the concentric palaces.

It is clear both from the context in which this passage occurs in *3 Enoch* (an account of the wonders of heaven) and from the passage itself (it is talking about what happens “in the heights”) that we have here an account of the celestial, not the terrestrial, realm. In the celestial world terrestrial physical laws do not operate. Things can occur in heaven that are impossible on earth. These paradoxes are possible because of the infinite power of the divine fiat, symbolized by the divine names. The earth as we know it is, of course, equally the outcome of divine fiat: it is as it is because God at creation decided that it should be so. But God is equally capable of creating other worlds based on different physical laws, and in fact he has already done so: heaven is a parallel universe. The thinking here, for all the strangeness of the language, is astonishingly sophisticated.

There are other ways in which the otherness of the heaven is hinted at in Heikhalot literature. Numbers are used to bemuse the mind and to convey a sense of incomprehensibility. We have already noted an example of this in the tradition of the dimensions of the heavens, but it is even more strikingly expressed in the *Shi'ur Qomah* speculations. In certain Heikhalot texts the manifestation of God on the Throne of Glory is represented by a *Macranthropos*, the dimensions of whose limbs are given in inordinate detail. They are immense, so immense that they numb rather than inform the mind.¹² Large numbers can psychologically have this effect, at least in the case of ordinary mortals. We can perhaps cope more easily with large numbers than our forefathers in antiquity, yet surely even we find our minds “blown” by the numbers modern astronomers use, despite their endeavors to simplify them by introducing units of measurement such as “light-years.” I think the precise purpose of the large numbers in *Shi'ur Qomah* is to “blow” the mind. Strictly speaking we have here a quantitative difference: things in heaven are simply bigger. But where quantitative differences are so vast, they shade over into qualitative, and I would suggest that this is the point of *Shi'ur Qomah*: it is expressing a qualitative difference quantitatively. It represents the *Macranthropos* to all intents and purposes as inconceivable. It does not conform in any meaningful way to the laws that pertain in our world.

It is also possible that a deliberate appeal to paradoxicality may lie behind the puzzling designation of the Heikhalot mystics as *Yoredei Merkabah*. The texts clearly speak of *ascent* to heaven to behold God’s celestial Chariot, yet those who make this ascent are designated *descenders* to the Chariot. No one has yet proposed a satisfactory explanation for this contra-

¹² Martin S. Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism* (Lanham, N.Y.: University Press of America, 1983); and Martin S. Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Texts and Recensions* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1985).

dictory nomenclature,¹³ and I wonder if the paradoxical language is deliberate. As we shall see, if earth and heaven are parallel universes, then passing from one to the other becomes highly problematic. Perhaps this idea is expressed by the ascent/descent paradox: if heaven and earth are not on the same space-time continuum, then crossing the boundary between them cannot be a case of up or down: it is both! That is highly speculative, but one should also note that the *Merkabah* itself in the Heikhalot texts is represented not as a material structure—to speak of gross, terrestrial matter in heaven would be an insult to the sophistication of the *Yoredei Merkabah*—but as a complex of angelic hierarchies.¹⁴

Apotheosis and Incarnation

We have covered a lot of ground, jumping over the best part of a millennium from *1 Enoch* 14 to *3 Enoch*. Let us pause for a moment and take stock before moving on. I have attempted to isolate within early Jewish thought an idea that depicts heaven as being a fundamentally different sort of place from earth—a parallel universe, a different dimension of reality—one in which the physical laws which operate on earth do not apply. This idea was not easily expressed within the linguistic resources available to our authors, and the passages where it is found have often been misread as simply poetic, when in fact they are basically cosmological. They describe heaven either as a mono-elemental universe made up of that most pure and frightening of substances, fire, or like earth as multi-elemental, but with the primordial, antithetical elements eternally juxtaposed in ways that are unthinkable on earth. It was not inevitable that heaven should be conceived of in this way. There was the Elysian option of imagining it as simply a more perfect, a more beautiful earth, a paradise beyond the stars.¹⁵ The clearest examples I could find of the parallel-universe idea come, curiously, from the beginning and the end of the tradition, from some of the earliest layers of the Enochic corpus on the one hand and from the Heikhalot literature on the other. I suspect, however, that the same idea may underlie intervening texts, though they do not choose to articulate it in so explicit a way. A Talmudic example may serve to illustrate

¹³ E.g., the suggestion that it reflects the phrase *yarad lifnei hatebah*, the Merkabah in heaven being seen as analogous to the Ark in the synagogue, is hardly convincing.

¹⁴ See Alexander, "Introduction" to *3 Enoch*, in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, 240. That heaven is a dangerously confusing place is classically expressed in the famous story of the marble pavement that the ascending adept mistakes for water at his peril. The definitive analysis of this is provided by Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion: The Dangerous Vision of Water in Hekhalot Mysticism: A Source-Critical and Tradition-Historical Inquiry* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

¹⁵ On the Elysian option, see Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 16–18.

this point. In Babylonian Talmud *Hagigah* 15a, in an elaboration of the story of the Four who entered Pardes, we find an interesting variant of Aher's meeting with Metatron when he ascends to heaven. Encountering Metatron seated on a throne he exclaims (I follow here the reading of Vatican 134 and Munich 95; the Vilna text is corrupt): "It was taught that on high there is no standing and no sitting, no jealousy and no rivalry, no neck and no weariness (לא עמידה ולא ישיבה לא קינאה ולא תחרות לא עורר) (ולא עיפוי). Perhaps—God forbid!—there are two powers here." The tradition is cited to explain Aher's heresy: only God is allowed to sit in heaven; there is another celestial being sitting in heaven, *ergo* he must be a second power. But as I have argued elsewhere,¹⁶ a little reflection will show that this cannot be the original meaning of the statement. If we take it out of its present context and ask what it originally meant, then it was probably intended to encapsulate in a highly formulaic way the view that heaven is a fundamentally different place to earth, a place where the basic laws determining the nature of our world do not function.

There are other hints that the idea might have been more widely held. As I said earlier, logically if earth and heaven are parallel universes obeying different physical laws, then passing between the two becomes highly problematic. The denizens of these two realms are constituted differently because their universes are different, and for one simply to enter the domain of the other is impossible. A transformation has first to take place. For the human entering heaven that process involves "angelification" or "apotheosis" of some sort. Conversely, for a celestial being entering earth a process of incarnation must take place. The nature of each has to be adapted to the alien environment. This principle, which I have stated starkly in rather modern terms, seems implicit in a number of texts, and its presence, I would argue, points to a parallel-universe view of heaven, even when that view is not more openly stated.

Note the care with which some texts treat the ascent of a human to heaven. How did Enoch ascend in *1 Enoch* 14? The text is quite clear, though its plain sense has been widely ignored. Enoch did not physically ascend, nor did he ascend in spirit or soul. The ascent took place "in a vision." In other words, it was revealed to him what he would have seen had he actually made the ascent. But he himself remained, body and soul, on the earth. This neatly avoids the problem of how he, a human, could have entered the heavenly realm: it was all a dream, but true for all that.

Some other ascents probably do envisage some form of soul-excursion in which the soul leaves the body behind on earth and journeys through the

¹⁶ "3 Enoch and the Talmud," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 18 (1987): 60f.

heavenly regions, in the manner well documented in Shamanism.¹⁷ This is the most obvious explanation of the famous account of Rabbi Ishmael's ascent during the Great Séance described in *Heikhalot Rabbati* 15–22 (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §§198–239). It is notable, though, that many ascent texts are very reticent on the question of precisely how the ascent was made. In many cases modern scholars simply assume that they are talking about soul-excursion. The possibility of visionary ascent, as in *1 Enoch* 14, is not considered. If the tradition does recognize the concept of soul-ascent, then this can be easily and rationally justified if it is assumed that the soul/spirit, or whatever one chooses to call the entity making the excursion, originated in heaven. This idea is certainly found in the *Heikhalot* texts. *3 Enoch* 43 (Schäfer, *Synopse*, §927) claims that in heaven there exists a storehouse containing the souls yet to be born (i.e. inserted into bodies)—the *Guf ha-Beriyot* or *Guf haNeshamot*—and it imagines these souls, or at least the righteous among them, returning to heaven, to a region known as *Gan 'Eden*, after death.¹⁸ If the soul originates in heaven and returns to heaven, then its nature is suited to the heavenly sphere, and it should, in principle, encounter no difficulty in traveling there.

Even more revealing are those texts that boldly embrace the notion of a bodily ascent. The earliest clear reference that I can find to this is in the first century C.E. text known as *2 Enoch*. Enoch lies down on his bed and falls asleep, and two huge men appear to him, “the like of which,” he says, “I had never seen on earth.” The other-worldliness of these beings is carefully stressed: “Their faces were like the shining sun; their eyes were like burning lamps; from their mouths (something) like fire was coming forth; their clothing was various singing (?); and their arms were like wings of gold.” They stand at the head of the bed and call Enoch, who rises from his sleep and sees the men standing there “in actuality.” The angels announce that they have been sent by God to take him up to heaven. They tell him to set his family affairs in order. He does so, warning his children not to search for him. Then the angels summon him again, place him on their wings and carry him up to heaven (1:3–3:1). It is easy to miss what precisely is happening here. This is no visionary ascent or soul-excursion: Enoch goes

¹⁷James R. Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People behind the Hekhalot Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) argues that there are strong similarities between Shamanism and *Heikhalot* mysticism.

¹⁸Alexander's notes *ad loc.*, in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, 293–94. Further, Hans Bietenhard, *Die himmlische Welt im Urchristentum und Spätjudentum* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1951), 161–86.

bodily up to heaven.¹⁹ Note how this bodily ascent can be rooted in Scripture. If Enoch “was not” when God “took him” (Gen. 5), then his body cannot have been left behind.

But such bodily ascent into the alien, hostile realm of heaven demands bodily transformation, and this duly occurs:

And the Lord, with his own mouth, said to me, “Courage, Enoch, do not fear! Arise and stand before my face forever.” And Michael, the *archistrategē*, lifted me up and led me before the face of the Lord. And the Lord said to his servants, testing them, “Let Enoch ascend and stand before my face forever!” And the Lord’s glorious ones bowed down and said, “Let Enoch ascend in accordance with your will, O Lord!” And the Lord said to Michael, “Go and take Enoch out of his earthly garments and anoint him with sweet oil, and put him in the garments of my glory.” And Michael did so, as the Lord had commanded him. He anointed me and clothed me. And the sheen of that oil was brighter than the greatest light, its texture was like sweet dew, its fragrance like myrrh, and its glitter like the sun’s rays. And I looked at myself, and I had become like one of his glorious ones, and there was no visible difference. (2 *Enoch* 22:5–10)

Significantly, when Enoch returns to earth a reverse transformation has to take place: his face has to be “chilled,” otherwise no human being would be able to look upon it (2 *Enoch* 37).

An even more dramatic account of bodily ascent and bodily transformation is found in 3 *Enoch*. Though Ishmael in 3 *Enoch* seems to make a soul-excursion into heaven, he meets Enoch there who tells him how he bodily ascended and was transformed into the archangel Metatron:

R. Ishmael said: The Angel Metatron, Prince of the Divine Presence, the glory of the highest heaven, said to me: When the Holy One, blessed be he, took me to serve the throne of glory, the wheels of the chariot and all the needs of the *Shekhinah*, at once my flesh turned to flame, my sinews to blazing fire, my bones to juniper coals, my eyelashes to lightning flashes, my eyeballs to fiery torches, the hairs of my head to hot flames, all my limbs to wings of burning fire, and the substance of my body to blazing fire. On my right hand, those who cleave flames of fire; on my left, burning brands; round about me swept wind, tempest, and storm; and the roar of earthquake upon earthquake was before and behind me. (3 *Enoch* 15:1–2)

Just as ascent to heaven requires transformation, so does descent. This idea is most famously articulated in New Testament Christology, and need not be elaborated here. Christ, as the “one who descended from heaven,” to use the Johannine terminology, has to become flesh if he is to dwell on earth, and his re-ascent to heaven involves a transformation of that flesh

¹⁹A view accepted by Andrei Orlov, “‘Without Measure and Without Analogy:’ The Tradition of the Divine Body in 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch*” (forthcoming). The point is clearly made in both the long and short recensions of the text.

into something spiritual.²⁰ The resurrected Christ is the forerunner of all who believe in him. They are destined to undergo the same transformation that he underwent. This idea lies behind the Pauline view of the resurrection,²¹ but even more revealing for our present purposes is 2 *Baruch* 50:1–51:13:

²⁰For Christ as “the one who descended from heaven,” see John 3:13: “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.” The purpose of denying other ascents is to affirm the unique mediatorial role of Christ: he alone can be the forerunner. Key texts expressing the idea that Christ’s descent involved transformation are John 1:14 and Phil. 2:6–7. That his re-ascent involved transformation is also clear, if somewhat more obliquely expressed. The tradition hints that there was something strange about Christ’s resurrection body. While Luke 24:13–53 and John 20:1–29 stress in various ways its physicality, they also have Jesus vanish and reappear (apparently passing through closed doors: John 20:19), in ways that suggest his body is somehow different and more spiritual than that of ordinary mortals. That Christ’s resurrection body was “spiritual” is absolutely fundamental to Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 15. A biblical passage that causes immense theological difficulties if one embraces a strict ontological dualism between heaven and earth is Gen 6:1–4. If the Sons of God there are heavenly beings, as was the almost universal view in early Judaism (see Philip S. Alexander, “The Targumim and Early Exegesis of ‘Sons of God’ in Genesis 6,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 23 (1972): 60–71), then how could they possibly have coupled with earthly women? Curiously 1 Enoch ignores this problem. However, it puzzled later readers. *Testament of Reuben* 5:6 offers an ingenious solution based on an early embryological theory, which lies behind Jacob’s tricking of Laban in Gen 30:37–43 (see Julius Preuss, *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine*, trans. Fred Rosner (New York and London: Sanhedrin Press, 1978), 391–2): the Watchers appeared as phantasms to the women when they were having intercourse with their husbands, and the resultant offspring bore the Watchers’ imprint. This solution offers indirect, testimony to a belief in a radical dualism of heaven and earth.

²¹See especially 1 Corinthians 15. Two points seem clear from this difficult and much debated passage: (a) Christ’s resurrection is the paradigm and the earnest of the resurrection of those who belong to him; and (b) the resurrection body involves a transformation of the body believers possess in this life. The resurrection body is “imperishable,” “glorious,” “spiritual,” “immortal,” but above all “heavenly”: “just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven” (ver. 49). In other words the transformation the body will undergo at the resurrection is the same as that which it would have to undergo if it were to ascend direct into heaven: there is an exact parallelism between bodily ascension to heaven and bodily resurrection. Paul sees this bodily transformation as necessary to fulfill God’s promise that death will finally be defeated, but at the back of his mind may well be also a cosmological reason why it has to take place. Like the author of 2 *Baruch* 50–51, he believes that the earth in the world to come will be transformed: it will become like heaven, and if the resurrected are to live in this new world, they will have to become like the dwellers in heaven. As he himself notes, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (ver. 50). The world to come will quite literally be “heaven on earth.” That implies, by the way, that the cosmological dualism of heaven and earth involves an ethical dualism. For the possibility that Paul saw it as involving also an epistemological dualism see note 23. The idea that the resurrection body is a “heavenly” body is found again in Mark 12:25: “When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.” It is unclear whether Paul’s own ascension to heaven, to which he cryptically alludes in 2 Cor 12:1–4, necessitated physical transformation, since he himself is unsure whether or not it took place “in the body or out of the body.” For a full discussion of the problems raised by Paul’s doctrine of the resurrection body see N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (London: SPCK, 2003), particularly 209–398.

And he [God] answered and said to me, Listen, Baruch, to what I say, and engrave on the memory of your heart everything that you learn. The earth will surely give back the dead that it now receives so as to preserve them: without changing their form, it will give them back just as it received them; and as I delivered them to it, so will it raise them again. For it will be necessary then to show to the living that the dead have come back to life again, and that those who have departed have returned. And when those who are acquaintances now have recognized each other, then the judgment proper will begin, and the events spoken of before will come to pass.

And after the appointed day is over, the appearance of those who have been condemned and the glory of those who have been justified will be changed. For the appearance of the evil-doers will go from bad to worse, as they suffer torment. But the glory of those who have now been justified through their obedience to my law, who have shown understanding during their lives, and who have planted the root of wisdom in their hearts — their splendor will become more glorious as they are transformed, and their features will assume a luminous beauty, so that they may be able to attain and receive the world which does not die, which has been promised to them then. The others who return then will lament greatly because they rejected my law, and stopped up their ears, so that they might not hear wisdom or receive understanding. For they will see those whom they now regard as their inferiors elevated and glorified above them, for both these and those will be transformed, the one into the splendor of angels, and the other into terrible forms and horrible shapes, and they will utterly waste away. For they will see all this first; and afterwards they will depart to be tormented.

But those who have been saved by their works, whose hope has been in the Law, who have put their trust in understanding, and their confidence in wisdom, shall see marvels in their time. For they shall see a world which is now invisible to them, and they shall see a time which is now hidden from them, and time shall no longer age them. In the heights of that world shall they dwell, and they shall be like angels, and comparable to stars; and they shall be changed into whatever form they will, from beauty into loveliness, and from light to the splendor of glory. The extent of Paradise will be spread before their eyes, and they will be shown the majestic beauty of the Living Creatures that are beneath the Throne, as well as all the armies of the angels, who are now held back by my word lest they should reveal themselves, and are restrained by my command, so that they may keep their stations till the time of their advent comes. Then shall the splendor of the righteous exceed even the splendor of the angels. For the first shall receive the last, for whom they have been waiting, and the last shall receive those whom they have heard had passed away.

Here we do not have not so much an ascent to heaven as a breaking in of heaven to earth. This is experienced both as judgment and salvation. For the righteous it leads to transformation of their bodies so that they become like angels. For the wicked it leads to their ultimate decay and dissolution. The present dualism between earth and heaven will be overcome at the *eschaton*, and that overcoming will result in the full and final manifestation of the kingdom of heaven.

Wider Implications

In this brief paper it has not been possible to explore in depth all the ramifications of this rich and complex tradition, but I hope I have been able to say enough to outline my thesis. I have tried to show that there is a widespread idea in early Judaism, sometimes explicit, more often implicit, that sees heaven not in a crude way as simply the top storey of a two- or three-decker universe, but as a parallel universe to earth. The sum total of reality is divided into two parallel worlds that are vastly different from each other and operate according to different physical laws. As a result, movement between these worlds becomes deeply problematic. It poses an ontological problem that can only be solved by physical transformation: apotheosis if the movement is from earth to heaven, and incarnation if it is from heaven to earth.

This dualism is in origin cosmological, but it is capable of being developed in a variety of ways. It can evolve into an ethical dualism, if heaven is seen as the world of perfection and goodness, and earth the world of deficiency and evil. It can become a contrast between an evil material universe and a good spiritual universe. This potential was realized most obviously in Gnosticism, though it should be noted that the *Pleroma* is envisaged by Gnostics as lying *beyond* the heaven of our tradition. Many Gnostic writers, consistently with their anti-Judaic stance, place the heaven of our tradition within the material world of deficiency, which is the creation of the Demiurge, the God of the Old Testament.

There are some parallels between our idea and the Platonic distinction between the world of the ideas and the material world, but there is also a fundamental difference. The material world in Platonic thought is imprinted with the eternal forms: our world is an imperfect projection or shadow of the perfect world of the ideas. A single rationality (*logos*), therefore, suffuses both, and since the human intellect participates in the *logos*, it has ready access to the world of the ideas. Indeed, it is precisely the world of the ideas that can be most fully known. It is the material world that poses the epistemological problem: it can be known only to the extent that it participates in the world of the forms. This Platonic position is represented in Jewish thought by Philo, by the mediaeval Jewish Platonists, and by the Spanish Qabbalists' doctrine of the *Sefirot*, and hints of it can be found in the Rabbinic doctrine of the pre-existent Torah (*Gen. Rab.* 1:1). In the most radical of *our* texts, however, the implication is that a different rationality operates in heaven from that which operates on earth: far from being a world of transparency, order, and light, heaven is utterly bewildering to the visitor from earth. There is a sharp disjuncture between the two worlds. Our idea can, consequently, evolve easily into an epistemological dualism: heaven is a realm effectively closed off to the human intellect; it can be talked of only

in terms of paradox, negation, and myth. It was not until the Middle Ages that this thought was to receive full philosophical formulation within Judaism among the Aristotelians, particularly Maimonides in his *Guide of the Perplexed*,²² but there are fleeting expressions of it in early texts.²³

One final thought. If my analysis is correct, then it suggests that the tradition is much more sophisticated than we might be inclined to suppose. Here is no primitive two- or three-decker universe. It is a categorical mistake to read these texts in too literalist a fashion. Rather we should see them as highly sophisticated attempts to use symbolic, mythic language to imagine models of reality of great religious potential and power. The models of the cosmos the mediaeval Jewish thinkers saw in this tradition may not be entirely anachronistic, but may instead, to some degree, be correctly drawing out its underlying sense. The human mind seems to have surprisingly limited resources to imagine the cosmos. Though modern cosmologists have infinitely greater data on which to base their models and know infinitely more about how things work, when they come to synthesize their ideas into a big picture, it is surprising how little their imaginings are able to advance beyond those of antiquity.

²²Epistemologically Maimonides distinguishes between the sublunar and the supralunar spheres. The former is accessible to the human intellect, whereas the latter is not. However, Maimonides does not seem to believe that the supralunar realm, the world of God and his angels, is totally unknowable, or can be talked of only apophatically through negation. It can be known, to a degree, through the *aggadot* of Torah, which are not mere guesses, but divine revelation. Torah provides us with a divinely authorized set of symbols and images with which to picture the heavenly world. For a full statement of this argument see the dissertation of my doctoral student, Donald McCallum, *Silence and Salvation in Maimonides Guide of the Perplexed* (Ph.D. diss., University of Manchester, 2004). Maimonides identifies the heavenly world with the *Merkabah* of the early Jewish mystics. He uses their *Merkabah* speculations to root his own ideas in Jewish tradition, implying that what he is saying is not all that different from what they were saying. It is one of the contentions of this paper that he may be nearer the mark than many suppose.

²³Note for example 1 Cor 2:9. By the things that “God has prepared for those who love him,” Paul probably understands the blessings of the world to come, but if the world to come is “heaven upon earth,” then this would be consistent with the view that heaven is beyond what the eye can see or the ear hear or the human heart conceive. In other words it is beyond our knowledge in our present state. We can only catch glimpses of it through the revelation of the Spirit—a view remarkably close to that of Maimonides (see note 21)!

Fred L. Horton

Dualism in the New Testament

A Surprising Rhetoric and a Rhetoric of Surprise

Introduction

If by “dualism” we mean a world view that divides reality into two conflicting realms¹ and understands the experience of mortals as being touched by both realms, then it would be surprising if the works of the New Testament were not dualistic. Although some of the religions of the Greco-Roman world—most notably the official cults—could not be called dualistic, the popular religious movements that engaged the imagination and loyalty of men and women across the empire were almost uniformly so. Whether one joined the cult of Isis and Osiris, the Pythagoreans, or the Qumran sect, both the rhetoric and the cultus of the movement were invariably dualistic, describing the devotee’s life in its usual environment as inferior, lacking, or even evil and offering the believer contact with or even transcendence into another realm of being. A Pharisee would seek a place in the world age to come. A sectarian at Qumran would hope to take part in the war of the children of light against the children of darkness with a view toward participation in the coming new age. Likewise, devotees of Persephone or Adonis would seek to transcend their mortal existences through mystical union with the dying and rising divinity. None of these religious systems involve mere dualities. The immortality of the mysteries is the very opposite of the imperfect, mortal existence of their initiates. The present evil age (*‘olam hazzeh*) is the stark antithesis of the longed for age to come (*‘olam habba*). We cannot imagine a gradation of shades between light and darkness, good and evil. Thoroughgoing dualistic language was the stock-in-trade of popular religion.

¹ Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. T. Pendergast (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 171, defines dualism as “a doctrine according to which reality derives from two irreducible and antagonistic principles.” Ugo Bianchi would define religious dualism in terms of “two supreme opposed powers or gods,” a definition he admits later is not always so tidy. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* (2004), <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=117389>> (19 February, 2004). As we shall see, scholars have not always restricted dualism to such systems.

Dualism in New Testament Scholarship

Scholars have used various typologies for dualistic systems, especially in an attempt to distinguish between dualisms that recognize no power or god higher than the two competing gods or powers and those that see the conflict of the two cosmic powers as occurring under the ultimate authority of a single divine reality. Bianchi has termed the first “radical dualism,” and the second “moderate” or “monarchial dualism.”² New Testament scholars have, for the most part, been willing to allow for the existence of some “moderate dualism” in the early Christian writings, while arguing strongly against anything like Bianchi’s “absolute dualism.”³ Xavier Léon-Dufour declares: “The NT does not retain a true dualism.”³ “True dualism” for him is the same as Bianchi’s “absolute dualism.” Rudolf Schnackenburg comes close to Bianchi’s language when he delineates three kinds of dualism in the New Testament and then follows these categories with a warning: “Einen extremen, absoluten D[ualismus] gibt es im Bereich der Bibel nirgends”.⁴

Erst im Spätjudentum prägt sich entspr. der allg. Zeitströmung ein D[ualismus] in mancherlei Schattierungen aus, der aber nie (wie z.T. in Parsismus, Hellenismus u. Gnostizismus) ein prinzipieller (zwei Urprinzipien) u. absoluter (Gut u. Böse gleich starke Mächte oder Bereiche) wird.⁵

Evidently, if there is dualism of any kind in the Bible, including the New Testament, that dualism must be “moderate” or “monarchial.”

We cannot surmise that New Testament scholars have been universally happy about what now seems to be a consensus about the term “dualism.” To describe the dualistic language of the New Testament and then declare that the New Testament does not contain a “real dualism” shows a certain sensitivity about the term.

For Albert Schweitzer, concentrating on the writings of Paul, dualism was a condition of mind made necessary by human limitations but redeemed in the Christ-mysticism of the New Testament. In his view, the “Messianic eschatological world-view” overcomes dualism with the only kind of monism possible to human beings, a monism achieved through union with Christ.⁶ So one finds dualism in the writings of Paul, but Christ-

² Ugo Bianchi, “Dualism,” *ER* 4:508.

³ Léon-Dufour, *Dictionary*, 171.

⁴ Rudolf Schnackenburg, “Dualismus II: In der Schrift,” *LTK* 3:583–586. The quotation is from 585. His three categories are anthropological (583–584), cosmic (584), and ethical (584).

⁵ Schnackenburg, “Dualismus,” 584.

⁶ *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (New York: Seabury, 1968), 379. While “messianic-eschatological mysticism” brings us to monism, direct God-mysticism is impossible (378). As a result, the inability of human beings to comprehend the infinite makes dualism unavoidable (378–79).

mysticism redeems it into monism. Such is, one might suggest, a wistful concession to the fact of dualistic language in Paul. It is a temporary convenience of mind for the initiate who will finally recognize it as such through the experience of the risen Christ. This sophisticated, even arcane, view did not achieve notable success among other New Testament scholars. Ultimately, it interpreted the dualistic language of Paul by devaluing it. Schweitzer, however, shows the same wistful discomfort with dualism in Paul that Xavier Léon-Dufour displayed for the entire New Testament. Little, though, can come from denying the very thing one sees and defines.⁷ Whatever qualifying adjective we use, the New Testament clearly contains dualism expressed in terms of stark oppositions like flesh and spirit, light and darkness, good and evil, heaven and earth, this age and the age to come.

Another strategy for dealing with dualistic language in the New Testament is to suggest that it derives from foreign influence that distorts the essential non-dualistic character of biblical faith. This was clearly the intent of Hermann Gunkel's 1903 history-of-religions study of the New Testament.⁸ Through Judaism, early Christianity adopted oriental concepts quite unlike those of the Old Testament, concepts which, Gunkel contends, remind one of dualism.⁹ Richard Reitzenstein, on the other hand, found that Paul had read deeply in the syncretistic literature of Hellenism and that it was his familiarity with the mysteries that brought him to his departure from Judaism.¹⁰

In 1913, Wilhelm Bousset tried to give a systematic basis for Reitzenstein's views and in his *Kyrios Christos* traced the origins of Paul's Christ-Adam typology back to a Gentile or Hellenistic Gnosis, strongly rejecting the idea that this idea could derive either from the Jewish scriptures or from the gospel of Jesus.¹¹ Likewise, Bousset rejected the notion that this typology

⁷ One must put Ugo Bianchi among those wistful writers, when he almost casually informs us that there is no "real dualism" in Judaism apart from Gnosticism and theosophy and that its vigorous monotheism is its defense against such "real dualism." For early Christianity, Bianchi simply restricts "dualistic concepts to Gnosticism and to the Encratites. See, for instance, Ugo Bianchi, "Dualism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* (2004), <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109474>> (19 February, 2004), as well as his article on dualism in *ER* 4:506–12.

⁸ *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1903).

⁹ See the useful summary of Gunkel's work in Werner Georg Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems*, trans. S. MacLean Gilmour and Howard Clark Kee (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1972), 258–59.

¹⁰ Richard Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, ihre Grundgedanken und Wirkungen* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Tuebner, 1910). See Kümmel, *The New Testament*, 268.

¹¹ Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press), 181–200. The first edition of this work appeared as *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1913).

gy could have its roots in Greek philosophy. Only with Philo and the Hermetica do we begin to see the oppositions that Paul will reflect in his dualistic anthropology.¹² Both Paul and John replace Jesus' preaching of forgiveness of sins with a dualistic doctrine of redemption.¹³ Dualism became in Bousset's work the measure of early Christianity's distance from Jesus' preaching.

Rudolph Bultmann believed the dualistic elements of pre-Pauline Christianity were "Gnostic" in character. The Gnostic influence on early Christianity could, he believed, most easily be seen in three realms of dualistic ideation: (1) an amplification of Jewish eschatological dualism, (2) ideas of the "fall" or "decay" of creation, and (3) the replacement of the history of salvation with a myth of the redeemer's descent and ascent.¹⁴ Although we may not always be able to tell which expressions derive from Gnosticism directly and which were mediated through Judaism, Bultmann contends that the ultimate source of the New Testament's Gnostic language is Gnostic expansion of Iranian and Babylonian mythological concepts.¹⁵ Dualism can be, in this view, a measure of that Gnostic/Iranian/Babylonian influence, the litmus test both of its presence and the quantitative measure of its extent. Still, at the end of the day for Bultmann, dualism is a foreign element, something unprecedented in the biblical tradition.

The discovery and publication of some (and eventually all) of the Coptic Gnostic manuscripts from Nag Hammadi changed the terms of this discussion noticeably. We were now arguably in possession of Gnostic texts, not patristic paraphrases or late compilations like the *Pistis Sophia* or *Books of Jeu*, which allowed us to finetune our understandings of the origins of Gnosticism. Most surprising in all of this was the important relationship of Gnosticism to Judaism. Early on, before most of the documents were known to New Testament scholars, Gilles Quispel had held that the newly published documents were grounded in an extreme, even aberrant Judaism.¹⁶ Without Christian concepts and terminology, many of the documents would be completely coherent, but without Judaism, without Jewish scripture, Jewish sectarian ideas, Jewish religious terminology, there would be nothing coherent in any of the material. Even though Quispel's hypothe-

¹² According to Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 184, Philo believes that human beings partake only of a "lower, earthly sphere" and must receive as a gift of God the "higher element," *Nous* or *Pneuma*.

¹³ Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, 243–44. See also 263–64.

¹⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1951), 1:172–83.

¹⁵ Bultmann, *Theology* 1:172.

¹⁶ For an early statement of his view, see Gilles Quispel, *Gnosis als Weltreligion* (Zürich: Ori-go, 1951).

sis of a Jewish origin of Gnosticism was not universally adopted, it became apparent that the new discoveries would cause us to abandon the notion that Gnosticism was simply a Christian heresy. The Gnosticism we find at Nag Hammadi is not Harnack's "acute secularising hellenising of Christianity."¹⁷

The abrupt change in viewpoint occasioned by the publication of the Chenoboskion library was adapted well by Walter Schmithals, who moved away from Bultmann's idea of having pre-Pauline Hellenistic Christianity employ Gnostic dualism to having Paul answer Christian Gnosis, a process that invariably affected Paul's own language and religious ideation.¹⁸ This view had the added advantage of putting the Judaizing controversy in Galatians within the context of an aberrant Judaism replete with Gnostic beliefs.¹⁹ Yes, the surface of the thing was Jewish, but on the inside the apostasy that threatened the Christians in Galatia was a Gnosis that like all Gnosis derived from the application of certain selected, even marginal ideas within esoteric Judaism.

Even as Nag Hammadi forced some rethinking about the relationship of Gnostic dualism to Judaism, the other major textual discovery of the post-war era, the Dead Sea Scrolls, was reopening debate about the possible influence of Iranian religion on earliest Christianity in a way that reminded one of Gunkel's early thesis. The route from Iran to the New Testament was not through pre-Christian Gnosticism but through sectarian Judaism, much as Gunkel had imagined, but the reality of the Scrolls gave the thesis historical substance.

Helmer Ringgren, echoing Karl G. Kuhn, was certain that the dualism of the Scrolls had to be Iranian in origin and, following Michaud and Duchesne-Guillemin, contended that Qumran sectarianism bore the unmistakable stamp of Zurvanism.²⁰ Although Richard Nelson Frye challenged the belief that Zurvanism was a heretical sect of Zoroastrianism and denied the

¹⁷ Adolf Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (7 vols.; New York: Dover, 1961), 1:227.

¹⁸ Above all, see *Die Gnosis in Korinth: eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments n. F., 48; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956).

¹⁹ Walter Schmithals, "Die Häretiker in Galatien," *ZNW* 47 (1956): 25–67. An expanded version of that work appears as the first chapter of *Paul and the Gnostics*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville and New York, Abingdon, 1972), 13–64.

²⁰ Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran: Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, trans. Emilie T. Sander (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 78–80. Ringgren cites Karl G. Kuhn "Die Sekten-schrift und die iranische Religion," *ZThK* 49 (1952): 296–316; Henri Michaud, "Un mythe zervanite dans un des manuscrits de Qumran," *VT* 5 (1955): 137–47, and Jean Duchesne-Guillemin, "Le Zervanisme et les manuscrits de la Mer Morte," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 1 (1957): 96–99. For a helpful overview of this Zoroastrian heresy, see Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 96.

applicability of Zurvanism to the discussion of dualism at Qumran, he did not succeed in blunting a growing tendency among biblical scholars to locate the origins of Qumran dualism in Iranian or Zoroastrian dualism.²¹ Frye was challenging a scholarly excitement for and interest in Zurvanism that did not begin with Michaud or Duchesne-Guillemin, or for that matter even with Reitzenstein. This excitement and interest stemmed from the mid-nineteenth century and, if Professor Boyce is to be followed,²² to the work of a single scholar, the German orientalist Martin Haug.²³ Boyce makes clear how appealing Haug's "European heresy" was even for western Zoroastrians themselves who needed to defend Zoroastrian dualism against Christian monism.²⁴ Here at last we seemed to have a religious movement from western Iran that was thoroughly dualistic and could be conceived of as influencing both Israel and the Greek world. Leaving to scholars of Iranian religion the question as to whether Zurvanism was an actual heretical sect or merely a theological movement within Zoroastrianism, the Zurvanism of Ringgren is a convenient western model for the dualism of Qumran and, by extension, for the sectarian Jewish influence on Christianity.

The result for modern New Testament study has been a confluence of two streams. The discoveries at Nag Hammadi made it difficult, if not impossible, to support Reitzenstein and Bousset in the belief that a pre-Christian Gnosticism, speaking the new language of redemption and *Ur-mensch*, could have been the vehicle of Christian dualism. The supposed Iranian backgrounds were ultimately derived from Gnostic systems that grew up much later than some of the systems represented at Chenoboskion. At the same time, the discovery made it impossible to maintain the old position of Harnack that Gnosticism was a hellenization of Christianity. Some of the early Gnostic systems reflected at Nag Hammadi contained nothing Christian at all. On the other hand, the prevalence of allusions to and quotations of Jewish scripture in the earliest documents, the clear ref-

²¹ Richard Nelson Frye, "Reitzenstein and Qumran Revisited by an Iranian," *HTR* 55 (1962): 261–68.

²² Boyce, *Textual Sources*, 132–34. In his Hibbert Lectures, James Hope Moulton assures the reader that the only Iranian ideas that influenced Israel were not a pure dualistic opposition between Ahura Mazdâ and Angra Mainyu: "Later Parsism subordinates Ahriman as thoroughly as could be." See James Hope Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913), 305. Enthusiasm for such a subordinated dualism has, evidently, stood behind various modern reform movements within Zoroastrianism that have answered western criticism of absolute dualism in Zoroastrianism. According to Boyce, *Textual Sources*, 132, this "European heresy" was born at the desk of Haug himself.

²³ See Martin Haug, Edward William West, and E. P. Evans, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis* (Trübner's Oriental Series; London: Trübner's, 1884).

²⁴ Boyce, *Textual Sources*, 132.

lection of Jewish concepts and even Aramaic and Hebrew language,²⁵ lent credence to Quispel's thesis about the origins of Gnosticism on the fringes of Judaism. At the same time, in the desert of Jordan, manuscript discoveries were revealing the life and beliefs of a "fringe" or "sectarian" group of Jews whose literature would ultimately challenge the very idea of a "fringe" Judaism over against normative or mainstream Judaism. Within the community of Scrolls scholarship, it became common to reassert Gunkel's old suggestion on the basis of the new evidence. Judaism became the entryway for the dualistic concepts and language of the New Testament. One can be comfortable either in asserting a vague Iranian background for Christian dualistic formulations, as Frye observes,²⁶ or one may omit it altogether, since Judaism, not Zoroastrianism, would have been the final port from which the ship of dualism sailed.

David Flusser summed up the contribution of Qumran theology to the theology of the pre-Pauline community as follows:

[T]he world is divided into the realms of good and evil; mankind consists of the two camps: the Sons of Light—actually the community itself—and those who are of the Devil. The division is preordained by the sovereign will of God (double predestination). The Sons of Light are the Elect of Divine grace and were granted the Spirit which frees them from the sins of the flesh. Baptism functions as a means of atonement. The company of the Elect is a kind of spiritual temple; this company is constituted by a new covenant with God; this covenant is eschatological and additional to the old covenant made with Israel.²⁷

The dualism here bears a strong resemblance to Haug's Zurvanism. Above all, we must protect the sovereignty of God, a sovereignty Flusser believes is expressed in Christianity and at Qumran with assignment of individuals to the "company of the Elect" over against those who belong to the Devil. Within such a relative dualism, the most heated combat between the elect and the powers of the underworld can develop without any danger that God's ultimate control over history might be compromised. Whether Flusser had Zurvanism in mind, his analysis of the Qumran influence on early Christianity had all the marks of the "European heresy."

So it is with almost palpable relief that Rudolf Schnackenburg assures his readers about the lack of absolute or radical dualism in the Bible.²⁸ Evidently, the dualism of the New Testament is now safely a subordinate

²⁵ For a discussion of Aramaic and Hebrew terms in Gnostic and magical sources, see my article, "Nochmals *ephphatha* in Mk 7,34," *ZNW* 77 (1986): 101–8.

²⁶ Frye, "Reitzenstein and Qumran Revisited by an Iranian," 262.

²⁷ "The DSS and pre-Pauline Christianity," *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1988), 264. Flusser explains in a footnote that he is omitting the term "Sons of Darkness" from this formulation because it does not occur in the New Testament.

²⁸ Schnackenburg, "Dualismus," 585.

dualism, which “nie die Oberheit Gottes in Frage stellt.”²⁹ Whatever the ultimate origins of the New Testament’s dualistic language, its “main roots” are in Judaism.³⁰ Schnackenburg includes in his article a typology of dualistic language in the New Testament where he finds anthropological, cosmic, and ethical dualism. This breakdown is somewhat different from Bultmann’s catalogue³¹ in that Schnackenburg’s now stresses the anthropological and ethical, whereas Bultmann’s categories favored the eschatological and mythological. With the recognition of the importance of Qumran for understanding New Testament dualism, the realm of the mythological and cosmological found itself reduced in favor of the human and ethical. It is not surprising that David Flusser finds the dualism of Qumran essentially an ethical dualism, and by extension, its influence upon pre-Pauline Christianity was also essentially ethical.³²

From Influence to Description

Discussion of dualism among New Testament scholars and with their colleagues in related fields has principally concerned itself with dualism as a measure of outside influence on the emerging Christianity. The results of these discussions have had less to do with the phenomenal description of the writings of the New Testament than with a process of getting behind them to determine the extent of Iranian, Gnostic, Hellenistic, or Qumran influence upon the new religion. We have not yet come to the place where we are describing the early Christian writings themselves in terms of the conceptual clarity available with the idea of dualism. Put another way, we have not yet considered early Christianity as a dualistic religion and its earliest literature as bearing the indelible stamp of Christianity’s own native dualism.

If the Christianity of the New Testament is a dualism, not just a monism beleaguered by outside dualistic forces, then we should be able to reconstruct from the literature of the New Testament a sense of what it meant to live the Christian dualistic life as portrayed in the New Testament. If earliest Christianity is dualistic, then what is its own native dualistic language, its own preferred way of describing the dual, competing realms that shape human experience? Further, how might Christian dualism impinge on the ordinary, non-cultic lives of Christians?

This paper undertakes to begin that investigation by dealing with some of the cognitive aspects of the early Christian dualism, illustrating those as-

²⁹ Schnackenburg, “Dualismus,” 583.

³⁰ Schnackenburg, “Dualismus,” 583.

³¹ Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:172–83.

³² Flusser, “The Dead Sea Sect and Pre-Pauline Christianity,” 217–20.

pects by appealing to two passages, one in Mark and one in 1 Corinthians, that appear to offer strong dualistic oppositions without employing some of the dualistic language most often cited in modern discussions of Christian origins. Both passages involve generally what George A. Kennedy, following Ernesto Grassi,³³ has called simply “sacred language.”³⁴ Neither the teachings of Jesus nor the writings of Paul would be “pure sacred language” in Kennedy’s mind.³⁵ The absolute demands of sacred language are often supported by some reason for it, and for this kind of amplification of sacred language Kennedy employs from classical rhetoric the *entheme*.³⁶ We shall have occasion to mention these designations later in this paper.

*Mark 10:2–12*³⁷

When Mark’s Jesus enters the famous debate about divorce and remarriage in Mark 10:2–9, he espouses a position that accords neither with the position of the School of Shammai nor with that of the School of Hillel.³⁸ Disarmingly, perhaps, Jesus asks his questioners about the written Torah that would apply to this case (Mark 10:3), and the Pharisees paraphrase back to him Deut 24:1, 3 (Mark 10:4).

In the Pharisaic debate, the issue centered on the meaning of the Hebrew words *‘erwat dabar* in Deut 24:1, the only passage in scripture that actually addresses the point at hand. If a man should find such an *‘erwat dabar* in his wife, he should write out for her a *sefer khitut*. The Pharisaic argument had focused on the enigmatic phrase *‘erwat dabar*. The School of Shammai understood the word *‘erwah* to be the most important element: “nakedness,” later “shame.” The School of Hillel found its interpretative crux in the indeterminate *dabar*, thereby justifying their position that divorce and remarriage would be allowable in virtually any circumstance in which a wife had displeased her husband. Against this interpretation, followers of Shammai contended that the reference to “nakedness” or “shame” implied that a man

³³ Ernesto Grassi, *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), 103–4. The five characteristics of such “sacred language” are (1) evangelical in character without a demonstrative function; (2) formulated without mediation; (3) metaphorical; (4) absolute and urgent; and (5) outside of time.

³⁴ George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Studies in Religion; Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 6.

³⁵ Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 7.

³⁶ Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 7.

³⁷ Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (HNT 3; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1987), 169, correctly observes that 10:1 marks the conclusion of 9:33–55 and relates it and, one presumes, 10:2–12 to the general context.

³⁸ There are many readily accessible accounts of this rabbinic debate. New Testament scholars have often relied on Str-B 1:303–15. See, for instance, Wolfgang Schrage, *Ethik des Neuen Testaments* (GNT 4th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 96.

might divorce his wife and marry another only in the case of some sexual misbehavior on the wife's part.

Strikingly, Mark's Jesus shows no interest in Deut 24:1, 3. Instead, he dismisses the rule about the *sefer krittut* as a concession to Israel's *sklērokardia* (Mark 10:5).³⁹ The relevant scripture, Jesus avers, is not in Deuteronomy but in the first, second, and fifth chapters of Genesis:

From the beginning of creation he made them male and female. (Gen 1:27; 5:2) Because of this a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. (Gen 2:4) So they are no longer two but one flesh. (Mark 10:6-8)

Commentators have made much of the fact that Deut 24: 1, 3 are not commandments and presumably fail to confer upon Israelite men the right to separate themselves from their wives.⁴⁰ This interpretation is tortuous if not tendentious. Walter Schmithals correctly notes that Deut 24:1 is scriptural law in its casuistic rather than in its apodictic formulation.⁴¹ It is no less law than any apodictic commandment and is the law, the only scriptural law, that applies directly to the question of the permissibility of divorce and the means for accomplishing it. Schmithals, though, tries to avoid the full implication of his insight by contending that the real question is whether divorce is permissible at all.⁴² If the permissibility of divorce is the real question, then the single answer of scripture is that it is permissible when done for the reason stated and with a bill of divorce. Anyone who knows the scriptures knows this. Schrage is right that both Pharisaic schools would have agreed that Deut 24:1 entitles a man to divorce his wife.⁴³ We might quibble over the permissible grounds for divorce but not over its permissibility.

This passage is not a classical *Streitgespräch*. Mark notes (10:2b) that the Pharisees pose their question to Jesus *peiazontes auton*. That is to say, they are examining Jesus' right to participate in any exchange of equals with them. They know that Deuteronomy 24 contains the single word of

³⁹ The term occurs in Deut 10:16 (LXX) where the Hebrew reads *umaltem 'et 'arlat lvavkem w'arpekem l'o taqšu 'od*. The LXX reading differs significantly from the MT. In the LXX it is the hardened heart that must suffer circumcision, whereas in the MT the heart must suffer circumcision so as not to result in a hardening of the neck.

⁴⁰ Recently, for instance, this point was made again by Marion C. Moeser, *The Anecdote in Mark, the Classical World, and the Rabbis* (JSNTSup 227; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 222.

⁴¹ Walter Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Markus, Kapitel 9, 2—16* (ÖTK 2/2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1979) 438.

⁴² "Die Frage der Phariseer zielt allerdings nicht auf diesen kasuistischen Streitfall, sondern auf die Erlaubnis zur Ehescheidung überhaupt." Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 438.

⁴³ Schrage, *Ethik*, 96.

scripture on the matter, and the passage is absolutely clear about the right of men to dismiss their wives even as it leaves much to the imagination about the legitimate reasons for such action. The operative question is whether Jesus knows the scripture and how to apply it.

Jesus appears to fail the test in verse 3, but Lührmann is right to point out that by asking the Pharisees, “What did Moses command you?” he is actually distancing himself from them, refusing the test in some way.⁴⁴ The correctness of the Pharisees’ reply gives the story its real power. Jesus neither argues about the conditions under which Deut 24:1 might apply nor about the legal right of men to divorce their wives. The Pharisees have given the right answer by citing the relevant scripture and rendering its usual and appropriate interpretation as regards divorce.⁴⁵ Jesus’ surprise rejoinder in verse 5 is unanticipated and, indeed, unpredictable.

How, we might ask, did Jesus know to dismiss the only materially relevant passage about divorce in scripture and to base his teaching, instead, on Genesis, indeed, on passages in Genesis that are neither casuistic nor apodictic law? Mark offers no answer. The implications of his deviation from the relevant law are potentially staggering. Are there other laws in scripture that Moses penned only for our hardness of heart? Do the laws of *kašrut* fall into this category, or some of them? Would thievery or murder be allowed those who do not suffer from hardness of heart? Although the text raises none of these questions, they may serve to remind us how precarious this pronouncement could be.

We do not have to speculate about the role of the reader/hearer in this passage. By withholding the basis on which Jesus determines that Deut 24:1 applies only to those with hard hearts, the reader has no way to derive the teaching from some other principle. Although it is perfectly reasonable to contend in retrospect that Jesus here appeals to a “creation theology,” we can discover that reasoning only after the fact.⁴⁶ In other disputes in Mark, Jesus appeals to principles other than “creation theology” to apply scripture. So far as this writer can determine, the passage in question is the only example of “creation theology” in Mark. Consequently, there is no way for

⁴⁴ Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, 169. Lührmann is not correct, however, to contend that Jesus here separates himself from the Jews. Jesus’ relationship to the Jews is not a question here, only his right to engage in debate with the Pharisees.

⁴⁵ In this respect, therefore, Mark 10:2–12 differs from the mishnaic pattern put forward by Moeser, *Anecdote in Mark*. It is not just a case of dueling scriptural interpretations, of one side citing its scriptural support and then the other, leaving the group to draw a conclusion. In Mark the Pharisees give the right answer, cite not only appropriate scripture but, in fact, the only legally relevant scripture on the subject. Jesus’ citations are not direct law.

⁴⁶ Walter Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 439, holds that such a *Schöpfungstheologie* does not accord with the ways in which Jews might argue a case from scripture.

the reader/hearer to exclaim, "I knew it all along." In fact, the text absolutely precludes this response.

What response, though, beyond surprise, might we anticipate in the mind of the *impliziter Leser*?⁴⁷ That question is one the text addresses directly and answers concretely.

The ideal "implied reader" will share in the general amazement and attendant fear that Mark always associates with the presence of Jesus. Mark 10:32 summarizes well the reaction of the disciples to all of the teachings that follow the second prediction of the passion (Mark 9:31–32), including Mark 10:2–12. Jesus' disciples were amazed and afraid. We find in verse 32 not only an analysis of the disciples' mental condition but also that of Mark's readers: they were afraid.

All of the Capernaum teachings in Mark 9:33–10:31 have been surprising and frightening. Although Jesus' solution to the question of who will be the greatest bears a certain resemblance to the wisdom tradition's recommendations about discretion and modesty at public feasts, the figure of the little child in verses 36–37 is unexpected and not clearly related to the wisdom teaching in verses 33–34:

Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me does not receive me but the one who sent me. (Mark 10:36–37)

How are we to understand this? While we can accept that Jesus is privy to a source of wisdom beyond that of his students, the surprising appearance of this wisdom does not lead either disciples or reader to understand. There is no "Aha-Erlebnis," no sense of a mystery solved. Instead, the dispute leads to no answer at all.⁴⁸

The disciples failed another test as well. In Mark 9:38, John reports that the disciples had forbidden a person from casting out demons in Jesus' name because that person did not belong to the company of Jesus' students. It should be obvious that one who is not a student has no right to act in the name of a teacher.⁴⁹ That conclusion, while almost trivial, turned out to be

⁴⁷ For this terminology see Wolfgang Iser, *Der implizite Leser* (Munich: W. Fink, 1972).

⁴⁸ Jesus' answers to questions from his enemies produce exactly the same wonderment and fear without understanding as do his answers to the disciples. For instance, in answer to the question from the Pharisees and Herodians in Mark 12:14, he does not resolve the issue of paying taxes. Simply to say, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's," studiously leaves open the question of what, in fact, belongs to Caesar and what does not. The reply occasions astonishment, but it does not result in understanding.

⁴⁹ Here I understand the clause "in your name" to mean that the exorcist did not follow Jesus in the sense that the Hebrew expression *halak 'ahare...* means "belong to the school of..." The word school here is troubling, but the fact that John addresses Jesus specifically as *didaskale* makes the pedagogical interpretation irresistible. It is the right of the student to act in the place of or in the name of the teacher. The strange exorcist has no such right.

incorrect. It was an error to forbid the exorcist to use the name of Jesus. Despite the reasoning developed in verses 39–40, it is not at all clear how the disciples might have known to let the exorcist alone. Jesus' teaching appears to go beyond the obvious meaning of the teacher-student relationship.

To this Mark has added the logion that offers blessing to any who would give the disciples a cup of water *en onomati* because they belong to Christ (9:41).⁵⁰ There is a certain thread here, but it would be difficult to reproduce it. The issue begins as a discussion of the rights and duties of students but ends up as a teaching about intention. Although it may be true that the series of teachings were strung together like pearls on a string, to use Karl L. Schmidt's famous analogy,⁵¹ the actual result leaves us with no clue as to what binds this saying or the others together intellectually.

We now proceed to the very difficult sayings in Mark 9:42–48 that involve recommendations about self-mutilation. It simply does not deal with these sayings adequately to observe that eye or hand or foot probably cannot "offend." Perhaps they cannot, but if they did and one were to destroy them, then one might still enter into "life" as opposed to "Gehenna." Self-mutilation is strictly forbidden in Judaism, and the mutilated person may not enter into the temple precincts. Nevertheless, if one's hand causes one to stumble, one might cut it off in the hope of receiving life. Left open are the questions as to how one's hand or eye or foot might "scandalize" one and how the mutilated penitent might expect to enter into life sightless or lame or disabled by one's own action. We can only wonder how a person could know that this flaunting of law and tradition would lead to life instead of "Gehenna."

If there is a world or a reality in which Jesus' answer is coherent or understandable, it is not that world or reality inhabited either by the disciples or by Jesus' opponents. Jesus' wisdom does not come with the surprising pleasure of a difficult theorem elegantly proved but with the surprising perplexity of an answer to a question not asked. When the Sadducees challenge him about the resurrection, he tells them that in the resurrection there is no marriage. Rather, those who participate in the resurrection will be like angels of heaven (Mark 12:25). Perhaps there could be agreement here between Jesus and the Sadducees that marriage had not turned out well for

⁵⁰ Should we read here? That reading has good support, but *en onomati* has even broader attestation and is the best reading. The short reading might reflect a Semitic *bshm*('), referring to the name of God. There seems to be some agreement, however, that the expression is a Sprichwort (Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, 167; Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 428) for the series 37, 38, 39, an observation that supports the long reading.

⁵¹ Karl L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu. literarkritische Untersuchungen zur ältesten Jesusüberlieferung* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919), 317.

the angels in Gen 6:1–4 (*1 Enoch* 6), but the knowledge that those of the resurrection would be like the angels of heaven⁵² is certainly new information that goes beyond the challenge that the Sadducees posed. We gain the impression here that Jesus has privileged information about the realm of the resurrected not available to others.

The reader experiences the fundamental dualism of Mark through such teachings as those found in 10:2–12 and in the general context of the three predictions of the passion. His replies to questions from students and opponents alike do not reveal a coherent intellectual system that one might expect disciple or reader to master, but a superior knowledge whose content Jesus can mediate, albeit in a piecemeal and *ad hoc* way, but whose fundamental principles lie far beyond the ken of reader and follower alike.

The dualism here is not between present and future, between death and resurrection, or even between evil and good. After all, the demons, which represent the underworld, recognize Jesus as the divine son and must be silenced. They too can reveal the truth of the other reality. In the reality Jesus represents death can become “life” or “Gehenna.” The scribe who expands Jesus’ answer about the greatest commandment in 12:32–33 is “not far from the kingdom of God” (verse 34). The dualism is between a reality in which none of this makes any sense and a reality in which it does.

The world of the disciples and of the reader/hearer, however, is one of hardness of heart and, consequently and appropriately, one of ignorance and fear.⁵³ With respect to those who challenged him about healing on the Sabbath, Jesus wondered at their hardness of heart (Mark 3:5), just as he would later proclaim in Mark 10:5 that Moses composed Deut 21:1, 3 because of “your hardness of heart.” Jesus’ answers seem always to be *non sequiturs* because those who hear them exist in a reality of ignorance and fear.

Kennedy believes that Mark is in its entirety an example of “radical Christian rhetoric,” “sacred language” without appeal to proof or reasoning.⁵⁴ Our analysis of Mark 10:2–12 does not support this conclusion, but Kennedy is not wrong to stress the radical nature of Jesus’ deliverance here as well as in the rest of the Gospel of Mark. Although Jesus gives supporting reasoning and proof for his argument here, there is simply no way the

⁵² The reference may be to the angels that did not conspire to take human wives. If the reference here is to the legend in 1 Enoch, we should find the “married” angels in the underworld.

⁵³ The issue of the ending of Mark lies beyond the scope of this paper, but Schmithals’ observation that 16:8 is certainly the ending of a pericope (*Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 715) is important. The women fled the tomb and kept their silence about what they had seen there because of their fear. The dualism is not resolved. Fear still characterizes the effect of non-understanding. It even leads to disobedience.

⁵⁴ Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 7, 104–7.

reader could have anticipated that reasoning and proof or known how to apply it to other situations.

The Gospel of Mark never resolves the tension between the cognitive world of Jesus' disciples and opponents and that of Jesus himself. Our part, the part of the reader and the part of the disciple, is to live in awe and anxiety at the same time. For Mark such awe and anxiety is the experience of Mark's dualistic faith in Jesus.

*1 Cor 6:12–20*⁵⁵

If the text-guided experience of dualism in Mark 10 can be expressed in terms of the absence of expected, even needed, steps in argumentation, we might wonder whether the same kinds of lacunae might alert us to similar guided experiences in other writings. If our thesis is right, then we should not only be able to see this experience in grand revelatory discourses but in passages that at first blush appear to be anything but dualistic in nature.

At the risk of being accused of having my mind on sex, I should like to turn next to Paul's admonition to the Christians in Corinth about avoiding prostitution. Although we may have overemphasized the extent of sexual immorality in the reformed Greco-Roman city of Corinth,⁵⁶ Paul seems in 1 Corinthians to have ample cause to warn his readers against sexual misconduct. The topic is not in itself dualistic and need not have apocalyptic overtones. For those very reasons it might be well to examine the passage to see whether the disjunctions we found in Mark 10 have analogies in 1 Corinthians 6 and with similar effect.

The reasoning behind Paul's admonition to the Corinthians (6:18) is complex, perhaps even needlessly so if its chief aim is to deter the Corinthians from prostitution. We would expect Paul to condemn any sexual immorality,⁵⁷ but his reasons for arguing against this particular form of immorality, *porneia*,⁵⁸ in this passage go beyond simple ethical instruction.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Ernst Käsemann, "I. Korinther 6, 19–20," *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen I* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1960), 276–79; idem, *Leib und Leib Christi: Eine Untersuchung zur paulinischen Begrifflichkeit I* (BHT 9; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1933); Renate Kirchoff, *Die Sünde gegen den eigenen Leib. Studien zur und porneia in I Kor 6, 12–20 und dem sozio-kulturellen Kontext der paulinischen Adressaten* (SUNT 18; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1994).

⁵⁶ Victor Paul Furnish, *The Theology of the First Letter to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), 2–3.

⁵⁷ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament*, trans. J. Holland-Smith and Max Hueber (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), 247–248, [*Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testamentes* (Handbuch der Moraltheologie 4; München, M. Hueber, 1954)], goes to some extremes in describing the sexual laxity of the early Roman empire.

⁵⁸ In this context, the best translation of *porneia* is "prostitution" since the argument specifically targets relations with a prostitute. Nevertheless, one must not forget that the term *porneia* also

Paul begins by citing a slogan the Corinthians themselves may have invoked to justify their sexual misbehavior and qualifies it with a limitation in his own words: *panta moi exestin all'ou panta symferi*.⁶⁰ We might well believe that what follows is going to be a thoughtful rejoinder to a slogan the Corinthians appear to have borrowed from the Cynics to justify their behavior.⁶¹ His restatement of the Corinthian motto in 12b and his second qualification of it warns us, however, that Paul will not be content with a mere exchange of views.⁶² He is already enlarging the scope of the discussion. There follows in verse 13 a surprising and seemingly untrue parallel.

1 Cor 6:13

One expects to read that food is for the stomach and sex is for the body. Not so. The body is for the Lord. How could the reader possibly know this? The various explanations of commentators stretch the imagination. Barrett, for instance, tells us that the stomach is impermanent matter whereas the body in Paul's view can have a spiritual nature.⁶³ Conzelmann informs us that the person is *σῶμα* insofar as we are not considering the person as a "thing," as, one supposes, an object among objects.⁶⁴ Lietzmann believes that because the stomach is corruptible, God has no interest

finds use in the LXX to describe idolatry as, for example, at Hosea 4:11 (LSJ *ad loc.*) and frequently in the prophets. This prophetic usage means that the reader familiar with the prophets in Greek would have been exposed to the figure of idolatry as prostitution on many occasions. The argument in 1 Cor 6:12–20, however, has to do with prostitution, not idolatry. Paul does not begin his discussion of the pagan cults in Corinth until 1 Cor 8.

⁵⁹ Andreas Lindemann, "Die paulinische Ekklesiologie angesichts der Lebenswirklichkeit der christlichen Gemeinde in Korinth," *The Corinthian Correspondence*, ed. R. Biring (BETL 125; Leuven: University Press, 1996), 63–86 [76–77], claims that the issue is not exactly traffic with prostitutes but with the Corinthians' toleration for such traffic. Using Kennedy's rhetorical labels, this chapter would be, as Kennedy supposes, most of 1 Corinthians to be, "deliberative rhetoric," rhetoric designed to persuade the reader/hearer to some action. See Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 19, 87.

⁶⁰ The same formula is repeated in 1 Cor 10:23. Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II* (HNT 9; 5th ed., rev.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1969), 27, held that this saying was Paul's formulation, indeed, *ein antijüdisches Schlagwort*; but he has found little following for this view. See Charles K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Harper's New Testament Commentaries; New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1968), 144–45; Hans Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (KEK 5; 11th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1969), 131; and Erich Fascher, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther. Erster Teil: Einführung und Auslegung der Kapitel 1–7* (THNT VII/1; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1984), 174–75.

⁶¹ See Francis Gerald Downing, *Cynics, Paul and the Pauline Churches: Cynics and Christian Origins II* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 98–104.

⁶² Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II*, 27, is right in my judgment to see "have power over" as the equivalent of "be allowed." Thus Paul's statement is, "All things are allowed me, but I am not subject to the power of anything." So also Barrett, *First Epistle*, 146.

⁶³ Barrett, *First Epistle*, 147.

⁶⁴ Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief*, 133.

in it. Because sexual activity has to do with the body, which is involved in resurrection, the body is of interest (belongs) to God.⁶⁵ Victor Paul Furnish has provided us with an extended theological rationale for Paul's difficult figure here. In his words,

Similarly, the body is only itself when it acts in accord with its relationship to Christ, and Christ is Lord in so far as he is present as Lord for those who belong to him.⁶⁶

Although one may certainly believe that Paul was capable of this kind of theological reasoning, it does not follow that Paul could have expected his readers to follow that reasoning even if they were steeped in Greek philosophy and religion. Downing, following Mark A. Plunkett,⁶⁷ argues that the usual critical understandings of Paul's argument make that argument very weak.⁶⁸ He is correct. If Paul is merely trying to convince his readers not to resort to prostitutes, he has already confused the issue and produced a weak argument. Its weakness, however, in my view, derives not so much from Paul's parallelism (or lack of it) but from the fact that the reader/hearer would have no clear basis on which to agree or disagree with it. It may be, however, that a weak argument for ethical sexual behavior may be a strong argument for something else entirely.

One effect of an imperfect comparison is to call attention to itself. If Paul had compared the stomach to the sexual organs as in *Pseudo-Diogenes* 28.5, 42,⁶⁹ then there would be nothing remarkable here. Whether Paul agreed or disagreed with the assertion that these organs have their natural objects, he could build a case to support the prohibition of prostitution. He does nothing of the kind. Instead, he breaks out of the comparison by telling us that the body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body. The reader/hearer may not understand the rationale, but the statement is all the more memorable because it is unexpected. What appears to be an argument in 6:13 is, in fact, an assertion that the body belongs to the Lord and the Lord to the body. At best, such an assertion relates only tangentially to the issue of sexual morality.

Verse 14 seems as much a *non sequitur* as the previous discussion of stomach and body, and Paul does not even attempt to make a causal connection.

⁶⁵ Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II*, 27.

⁶⁶ Furnish, *Theology*, 59.

⁶⁷ Mark A. Plunkett, "Sexual Ethics and the Christian Life: A Study of 1 Cor 6:12-7:7" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1988), 112-14. Plunkett here is in conversation with Rudolf Bultmann. See especially Rudolf Bultmann's seminal work in this area, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1910).

⁶⁸ Downing, *Cynics*, 106.

⁶⁹ As cited by Downing, *Cynics*, 104 n. 66.

1 Cor 6:14

The particle *de* provides the least possible relationship between verse 13 and verse 14, and its effect is only to add verse 14 to the previous statement. Verse 14 does not motivate the claim that the body is for the Lord; it merely expands it. Yet interpreters like Furnish⁷⁰ treat verse 14 as though it provided some kind of theological rationale for verses 12–13. It does no such thing. It merely adds information, information that is not completely new. Although there were some in Corinth who denied the possibility of resurrection in general (1 Cor 15:12), presumably even those readers would at least accept the truth of half the statement, that of Christ's resurrection.⁷¹ What is difficult is the placement of the material and its relationship to the subject matter.

The argument in the next verse is directed toward the reader's sensibilities.

1 Cor 6:15

Paul resorts to this ironic question format *ouk oidate* ten times in 1 Corinthians⁷² (six of those in chapter 6) and not at all in 2 Corinthians. Within the other letters that are assuredly Paul's, it occurs again only in Romans twice.⁷³ The particle of negation in this question presumes an affirmative reply: "Yes, we know this."⁷⁴ If they know that they are members of Christ, however, how can they visit prostitutes so as to make the members of Christ members of a prostitute? Stated another way, the fact that they visit

⁷⁰ Furnish, *Theology*, 58: "The ultimate expression of this lordship is to come 'at the end,' when Christ will claim the resurrected body (v. 14), wholly and without reservation, for the reign of God (15.24–28)." So far as I can tell, neither passage Furnish cites says anything about Christ claiming anyone's "resurrected body."

⁷¹ I find myself in agreement with the old view of Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II*, 79, that the Corinthians did not doubt the resurrection of Jesus but believed for themselves that they would be saved as immortal souls. His citation of Justin, *Dial.* 80.307a, who refers to "so-called Christians" (i. e., those who believe in immortality of the soul but not resurrection of the body) seems to me to portray accurately the difficulty Paul had in discussing the resurrection with readers with little background in apocalyptic Judaism. Barrett, *First Epistle*, 347, is right, of course, to insist that Jews had both resurrection and immortality in their tradition. One has only to read the Psalms of Solomon to understand how well rooted the idea of immortality was in Judaism. Resurrection, however, is no less well rooted in Jewish tradition and is a part of that tradition that could possibly provide intellectual stumbling blocks to a Greek reader that belief in immortality would not.

⁷² 1 Cor 3:16; 5:6; 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19; 9:13, 24.

⁷³ Rom 6:16; 11:2.

⁷⁴ BDF §§427 and 427(2); Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (rev. ed.; n. p.: Harvard University Press, 1956) §2651. Is this, however, a question? Neither Classical nor Koine distinguishes questions from declarative sentences in the absence of interrogative pronouns or adverbs (BDF §440; Smyth §2641). It is the rhetorical force of the verse, not its grammatical form, that makes it a question.

prostitutes means that they either do not have the knowledge or are failing to make use of it.

Since Paul resorts to the same figure again in 1 Corinthians 12, it is not unreasonable to believe that this teaching about membership in Christ is, indeed, shared knowledge, but a close comparison shows important differences between the figures in chapters 6 and 12. The figure in chapter 6 is blatantly and surprisingly physical, whereas in 1 Corinthians 12 there is no interest in the physicality of the figure. In chapter 12 Paul explains that the various “members” of the body are analogous to the relationship of the Corinthian Christians to Christ. They exercise their various gifts just as the parts of the body exercise their proper functions. The Corinthian Christians may indeed have learned from Paul about their membership in Christ, but Paul controls the application of the figure. There is no obvious model that a reader/hearer might employ to construct these two arguments. Physical or analogical, the figure lies outside of the reader’s competence though not outside of the reader’s understanding.

With sexual contact, Paul contends, the “members of Christ” become “members of a prostitute.” If, indeed, the readers know this, then how can they visit prostitutes?⁷⁵

The argument derives its force from the fact that the question demands an affirmative answer and then goes on to contend that the reader either does not really have the knowledge implied or is not making use of it. This is especially striking because there is virtually no way any reader could have made the cognitive leaps necessary to arrive at the conclusion that resorting to a prostitute makes Christ’s “members” members of a prostitute. The conclusion is memorable principally because it is a shocking image.⁷⁶

The physical nature of the figure continues to play a role in verse 16 as Paul develops his argument:

οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ὁ κολλώμενος τῇ πόρνῃ ἐν σῶμά ἐστιν; Ἔσονται γάρ, φησὶν, οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. (1 Cor 6:16)

The same implied “yes” to this question is ironic because the formulation is, in fact, unexpected and shocking even as is the scriptural proof for it. The relevant passage from Gen 2:24 reads:

⁷⁵ Because the form of the question expects an affirmative reply, Erich Fascher, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (THKNT; 2 vols.; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1982), 1:177, is incorrect to claim that the question allows for the possibility that there are readers who do not know. Barrett, *First Epistle*, 148, has it right. The behavior of the Corinthians is in contrast to the knowledge they should have. So, in fact, they are not in effective possession of that knowledge. This is, as we shall see, its own rhetorical device.

⁷⁶ Fascher, *Der erste Brief*, 177.

ἐνεκεν τούτου καταλείψει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν (Gen 2:24 LXX)

The differences between the text and that of Genesis are significant. For this argument to work, προσκολληθήσεται in Gen 2:24 must be the same as κολλώμενος in 1 Cor 6:16; but in truth there may not be much difference in meaning between the verbs.⁷⁷ Indeed, the proof text seems to depend on the two having more or less the same meaning. Genesis, however, does not proclaim man and wife to be “one body” but “one flesh,” even as Paul quotes it. The metonymical extension from “flesh” to “body” is Paul’s alone.⁷⁸ Whatever the possible background of this transition, it is difficult to see how the readers/hearers could have anticipated it. This failure undermines a positive answer to Paul’s question.

Even so, the metonym allows Paul to resort to the familiar flesh-spirit dichotomy. Instead of being joined to a prostitute, so as to be one flesh with her, the one who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit.⁷⁹ The language anticipates the language of 1 Cor 15:44 where Paul distinguishes the “fleshly body” from the “spiritual body.” We should not be surprised that we have this powerful allusion to Paul’s argument for the resurrection in chapter 15, but at this juncture in the text the reader would likely find the logic tortuous.

Verse 18 begins a new discussion: “Flee prostitution!” This is not the conclusion to the previous argument but the beginning of a new,⁸⁰ if related,⁸¹ line of thought. Nothing in the previous discussion would lead the reader to agree that prostitution is singular because it involves sin against

⁷⁷ Stanley E. Porter, “How Should *kollomenos* in 1 Cor 6:16–17 Be Translated?,” *ETL* 67/1 (1991): 105–6. In MM 352b–353a the examples have the expected meanings of “attach” or even “belong,” with the NT usage reflecting, in the editors’ minds, the Hebrew *dbq*. The verb on the other hand, has a reference to a sixth century will in which the verb is used to refer to the testator being “joined” to his wife (MM 549a). This last, however, may be too late to be important.

⁷⁸ On this see Klara Butting, “Pauline Variations on Genesis 2.24: Speaking of the Body of Christ in the Context of the Discussion Of Lifestyles,” trans. Brian McNeil, *JSNT* 79 (2000): 79–90 and Helmut Merklein, “Entstehung und Gehalt des paulinischen Leib-Christ-Gedankens [Rom 12:4ff; 1 Cor 1:13; 6:15; 10:16ff; 12:12–27; Gal 3:26–28],” in *Im Gespräch mit dem dreieinen Gott Elemente einer trinitarischen Theologie: Festschrift Wilhelm Breuning*, ed. Michael Böhnke and Heinz Hanspeter (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1985), 115–40.

⁷⁹ Modern translations like the RSV and NRSV seem unable to resist adding “with him” to this formula as did Luther, whereas the Authorized Version reads “But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” There is the same kind of variation in ancient versions. The Vulgate retains the wording of the Greek text *qui autem adheret Domino unus spiritus est* (5:17), whereas the Peshitta reads *‘mh*.

⁸⁰ Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I–II*, 28; Barrett, *First Epistle* 150.

⁸¹ Fascher, *Der erste Brief*, 178.

one's own body.⁸² Conzelmann sees Paul's subsequent words here as *ad hoc*,⁸³ and this insight preserves, at least, their unanticipated nature. Lietzmann comments that it is not absolutely true that only *porneia* offends against one's own body and contends that Paul is in effect forgetting such sins against the body as gluttony, drunkenness, self-mutilation, and suicide.⁸⁴ However one might account after the fact for Paul's omission, Paul's statement is not a conclusion from a line of reasoning we can reconstruct but a bald assertion. Whatever he may or may not mean by the term "body," the reader is not likely to be able to appreciate its theological subtleties. Like Lietzmann, this reader would be able to think of other wrongs that harm the body. But the juxtaposition of the new argument with the old is not accidental, though, and the reader/hearer could easily believe even in the absence of logical entailment that they are related to the language of body and flesh in verses 12–17. Once more, Paul resorts to the familiar question format.⁸⁵

1 Cor 6:19

Conzelmann correctly sees the apocalyptic and esoteric nature of the temple figure both here and in 1 Cor 3:16–17.⁸⁶ Barrett believes that Paul is using the figure of the temple differently here from the way he uses it in chapter 3 but then tells us that there is "no contradiction" between the corporate use of the figure in chapter 3 and the individualistic use in chapter 6.⁸⁷ Well, yes there is. Barrett just named it.⁸⁸ Conzelmann, for his part, tells us that Paul has simply "taken over" the corporate figure and applied it to the individual without giving us a reason as to why Paul might have done so.⁸⁹ We are accustomed, however, to this introduction of new information as though it were old information that the reader some-

⁸² It is also not (*contra* Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief*, 135) because sexual sin is somehow the worst kind of sin in Judaism.

⁸³ Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief*, 135.

⁸⁴ Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II*, 28. Barrett, *First Epistle*, 150–151, takes up this observation, appearing to settle on Calvin's notion of the great harm deriving from the filthiness of the "stain." This misses the point that Lietzmann apparently saw. As we would normally look at the matter, this one category of sin is simply not the only one that can be said to be "against the body."

⁸⁵ Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II*, 28, finds verses 19–20 to be *ausser Beziehung* with verse 18 and resumes in his estimation the thought of verses 15–17. If, however, we snatch verse 18 out of its place, the argument is no smoother than before. The difficulty is that it is not the kind of logical construction Lietzmann expects.

⁸⁶ Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief*, 96–97, 136.

⁸⁷ Barrett, *First Epistle*, 151.

⁸⁸ He is right, however, to relate the figure to the counsel of Epictetus (2.8.4) to the effect that human beings would not do the evil things they do if they knew that God dwelt within them. See Barrett, *First Epistle*, 90.

⁸⁹ Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief*, 136.

how should have known. The verbal similarities with the figure in chapter 3 increase the effect of this device.

The dwelling of the Spirit in this bodily temple is a gift from God. Obviously, the Corinthians could not demand that the Spirit live there (19b), but the temple belongs to the deity who inhabits it. This much is a reasonable surmise from the figure of the bodily temple. The reader would certainly understand that the Apollo Temple in Corinth belonged to Apollo. But the disjunction: "You do not belong to yourselves" leads to a new figure that has nothing to do with the ownership of temples but, rather, the ownership of slaves.⁹⁰ There is no particular connection between the two images. In addition to facing his readers with the idea that their bodies are sanctuaries of the Spirit, Paul also wants them to know that they are slaves of a new master, bought and paid for by an otherwise unspecified purchase price.⁹¹

But this is preface to the concluding injunction in verse 20b: The scope of the commandment is not simply avoiding prostitutes. Indeed, Paul has managed through his instruction about prostitution in chapter 6:12–20 to challenge the reader with new, perhaps even disturbing images of what their lives as Christians should resemble. He has done so by intimating that the reader really ought to have this knowledge already while at the same time imparting it for the first time. Kennedy, therefore, was correct to label this "deliberative rhetoric;"⁹² but the heart of the matter⁹³ was never the behavioral issue of resorting to prostitutes but the disorienting recognition of being members of Christ and at the same time temples of the divine spirit. This recognition would probably keep the reader out of brothels, but such behavior modification is hardly the main point of the passage.

Conclusions

Both of the passages we have considered ostensibly have to do with questions of human behavior and the reasons why the implied reader/hearer ought to conform to certain behavioral norms. We have seen, however, that in both cases the ethical and legal arguments did not really support the behavioral instruction but faced the reader with new claims for which the reader had little, if any, preparation.

⁹⁰ See Conzelmann's interesting excursus on buying slaves: Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief*, 137.

⁹¹ Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I-II*, 28, points to the idea of being redeemed from the law in Gal 3:13; 4:5 as background for this figure. In those two passages, we might point out, the means of buying such slaves of the law is no more specified than that of purchasing slaves in 1 Cor 6:20.

⁹² Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 87.

⁹³ Barrett, *First Epistle*, 143, entitles his comments on these verses as "The Root of the Trouble." That suggests that the principal task of the text is to repair a problem. The thesis here is that the problem is something of a pretext for the imparting of a difficult, even esoteric instruction.

The passages guide the reader's response to or experience of new knowledge. For Mark the experience of the kingdom is fearful, and the Gospel ends not with a joyous acclamation of the resurrection of Jesus but a fearful response that keeps the women from fulfilling the command to tell what they have seen.

Paul guides his reader in another direction. The reader should understand that the spirit dwells within the Christian's own body, that one's own person is not really one's own. This is just as disorienting in its own way as Mark's claim that even the plain sense of scripture is not plain. The experience in either case is the experience of a real and profound dualism. The Christian initiate lives in an unresolved conflict.

Zlatko Pleše

Gnostic Dualism

Problem

Dualism is an ambiguous term that, to quote Aristotle's famous phrase, "can be said of many things" (*pollakhôs legetai*) in many different ways. In its most general sense, it designates a universal tendency to classify phenomena into opposite groups. A proclivity to dichotomize, as structuralism has taught us, is the elementary mode of thought, the way in which humans structure and restructure perceptible phenomena defined through a series of binary contrasts. Dualism is thus a method of discovery that permits a diversified perception of phenomenal continuum, applicable to linguistics and cybernetics as well as to psychology, physics, or epistemology. The variety of dichotomous classifications is therefore infinite, not only because binary analysis can focus on any segment of reality, but also because no pair of opposites has a privileged status as a principle of division. Furthermore, the classification can use more than one pair of opposites to analyze the same domain. Finally, even the relationship between the binary opposites varies from one "dualist" system to another. Opposites can be mutually exclusive (contraries) as well as both exclusive and jointly exhaustive (contradictories), and they can be two species of the same genus as well as stand in the opposition of the genus to its species.¹

Applied to the field of religious production, these binary classifications yield various kinds of "dualism." With regard to a particular level of reality to which the division applies, dualism can be ontological and cosmic, epistemological and psychological, physical and ethical, social and individual, spatial and temporal. A similar variety can be discerned in the choice of opposites: two halves of a single whole (male vs. female), two opposite substances capable of blending (light vs. darkness, mind vs. body), two mutually destructive causes requiring mediation (life vs. death, good vs.

¹ Compare Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (2nd ed; London: Verso, 2002), xxvi, on the Hegelian dialectics and its ultimate insight into the nature of the cleavage within the Absolute: "This split has nothing whatsoever to do with the premodern notion that, at all levels of reality, an ontological Whole is always composed of two opposed forces or principles which have to be kept in balance...The Hegelian Twosome, rather, designates a split which cleaves the One from within, not into two parts...In this split, the opposition of two species coincides with the opposition between the genus itself and its species: it is the *same* element which encounters *itself* in its 'oppositional determination'."

evil, sameness vs. difference, individual freedom vs. social constraint), two spatially divided levels of reality (ideal model vs. visible copy), the opposites endowed with the capacity to act or to be acted upon (god vs. matter, intellect vs. soul), and so on.

It is clear from the examples we have considered that the variety of historically recorded dualistic classifications cannot easily fit in standard scholarly definitions of dualism as the doctrine of two opposite causal principles.² Even the most recent attempts at a more detailed specification cannot fully account for diverging modalities of dualistic thought—not only because of their imprecise use of such terms as “opposites,” “principles,” or “causes” but also because they disregard a tendency inherent to binary analysis to mediate or “sublate” all polarities and all oppositional determinations.³ In this essay, I examine the ways in which ancient Gnosticism, traditionally viewed as a paradigmatic expression of radical dualism, provides the solution to a dualistic deadlock by the intercession of a third intermediary cause operating at the cosmological and anthropological levels and by subsuming the primal dichotomy of ontological principles under the higher category of an all-encompassing principle of unity. This interpretation is structuralist in its core: it acknowledges the presence of polarities in “Gnostic” thought, but it also accords with the structuralist dictum that “the purpose of [Gnostic] myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction.”⁴

² See e.g. Ugo Bianchi, “The Category of Dualism in the Historical Phenomenology of Religion,” in *Temenos* 16 (1970): 15: “In our terminology dualism means the doctrine of the two principles. More precisely articulated, dualistic are all those religions, systems, conceptions of life which admit the dichotomy of the principles which, coeternal or not, cause the existence of that which does or seem to exist in the world.”

³ A rather comprehensive typology of dualistic thought can be found in Jörg Frey, “Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought in the Qumran Library,” in *Legal Texts and Legal Issue: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge 1995, Published in Honour of J. M. Baumgarten*, ed. Moshe Bernstein, Florentino García Martínez, and John Kampen (STDJ 23; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 275–335. He offers a helpful suggestion, valid only for the Qumran documents, that different patterns of dualistic terminology “conflate in the thought of the community and undergo further development” (288). For the danger of using such terms as “principle” and “cause” as synonymous terms, see a thorough analysis of Platonist theories of causation in Heinrich Dörrie and Matthias Baltes, *Die philosophische Lehre des Platonismus: Einige grundlegende Axiome/ Platonische Physik (im antiken Verständnis)*, vol. I of *Der Platonismus in der Antike: Grundlagen–System–Entwicklung* (Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1996), 378–79, 392. Ancient doxographers, for example, used to discuss these terms under separate headings (Ps.-Plut. *De plac. phil.* 1.3, 878B and 1.11, 882 E).

⁴ Claude Lévy-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 229. This structuralist dictum is actually as old as Plato and Aristotle. In his concise overview of ancient dualistic doctrines (*De Is. et Os.* 48, 370E–371A), Plutarch portrays Plato, his venerable teacher, as a dualist who “leaves room for a certain third nature between these two [opposite forces]...which depends on the other two, and constantly desires and pursues what is better.”

I have chosen as my case study a firsthand, fully narrated “Gnostic” myth as given in the *Apocryphon of John*. The text is not preserved in Greek, the language in which it was originally written, but only in four Coptic manuscript witnesses. In spite of many divergences in phraseology and theological details, all versions retain the distinctive features of the original document. These stable elements include: arrangement of the main thematic blocks typical for the genre of revelatory literature (cosmology–anthropology–soteriology); the presence of a “Christianized” narrative frame, in which the Savior, *Christus redivivus*, appears to John, his distressed disciple; a fairytale structure of the plot; and a hypotactic arrangement of the three levels of reality (spiritual realm–interstitial zone–phenomenal reality), each assigned to a particular discursive domain (Plato’s speculative idealism–Wisdom theosophy–Moses’ account of creation and the subsequent world history).

Ontology: The Absolute and Its Oppositional (In)determination

The *Apocryphon of John* postulates the derivational model of reality—a hierarchy of the levels of being descending from the first principle. This first principle, which constitutes the main subject in the opening section of Christ’s revelatory account, is called Unity, or Monarchy, which resists all predication and cannot be grasped by intellect, let alone logically deduced by discursive reasoning. A long litany of “apophatic” terms in the Savior’s discourse of praise (BG 22:17–26:14; NHC II 2:26:4–19) emphasizes not only the absolute transcendence of this first principle (God is not *x*; God is neither *x* nor *non-x*) but also its causal priority (God is *x* insofar as bestowing *X-ness* on creation). Somewhat surprisingly, this “apophatic” jargon is occasionally interspersed with more positive qualifications. The first principle of the *Apocryphon of John* is praised as “the pure light,” “the immeasurable light,” “the holy and undefiled purity,” “the fullness of light,” “the unmixed light,” “the pure luminous water,” “the perfect invisible virginal spirit,” one that “searches for its own self in the fullness of the light,” etc. These terms do not yield a definition of God as an individual essence. Rather, they describe the first principle as an indeterminate substance (Spirit or Light), as the only source of creation (Father), a non-reflected self-awareness, a pure gaze, a free expansion of thinking—in short, an absolute creative potential prior to its move toward self-realization. The final section of the Savior’s praise of the first principle offers a brief explanation for the inclusion of these positive qualifications:

What am I to say to you about it, the incomprehensible one? This is (only) the likeness of the light as far as I am able to conceive (*noein*). For who will ever conceive it? In so far as I can speak to you, its aeon is incorruptible, at rest, reposing in silence.

The one who is prior to everything is yet the head of every aeon—given that there exists anything beside it. For no one of us has known what belongs to the immeasurable one except for him who dwelt in it: it is he who told us these things. (BG 26:1–15)

The passage opens with *dubitatio* (“What am I to say about it, the incomprehensible one?”), which betrays the Savior’s inability to coin the univocal jargon suitable for describing God’s transcendence. Next there comes the climax of the whole Savior’s speech—a slightly modified version of the last verse in the Johannine prologue: “No one has ever seen God; it is the only begotten son [*var.* God], who dwells at the Father’s bosom, who has interpreted him” (John 1:18). The praise of the One in the *Apocryphon of John* is thus nothing but a philosophical elaboration of the mystery already revealed in the Fourth Gospel: God cannot be attained by intellection and logical means, but can only be made known by the mediation of the one “who has dwelled in him.”

The principal problem facing such a monistic concept of divinity is how to account for the passage of the absolute One beyond being and intellection to a finite multitude of subordinate entities. A common solution to this problem, first conceived by Xenocrates in the Old Academy and further developed by a considerable number of Middle Platonist (Antiochus, Plutarch, Alcinous, Apuleius) and “proto-orthodox” Christian theologians (Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius), was to identify God with the primal intellect that articulates its thought-content in the manner of dialectical deduction and subsequently realizes this predicative content, *viz.* intelligible forms, in the material substrate. Other levels of the universe result from an immanent self-deployment of this divine Intellect. As stated by Irenaeus in one of his disputes with the Valentinian “Gnostics,” the only legitimate analogy that can be applied to God is that of a self-thinking intellect—fully determined, in possession of all qualities, “comprising all things” (*Haer.* 2.13.4) *sensus enim capax omnium*), and endowed with impregnable stability and consistency of thoughts:

For the Father of all is at a great remove from human mental states and passions, and is simple, not compounded and without different numbers, entirely alike and equal to himself, for he is all intellect (*mens*), all spirit, and all intellection (*sensuabilitas*), all conception (*ennoia*) and all reason (*ratio*), all hearing and all seeing, all light and entirely the source of all good things. (2.13.3)

The other position, clearly preferred by the author of the *Apocryphon of John*, refuses such a rationalist explanation. The passage from the original unity to a finite multitude is not to be identified with a necessary act of God’s self-understanding, as exemplified in Aristotle’s famous formula of the divine intellect “thinking of itself by participation in that which is being thought” (Arist. *Metaph.* 12.7.1072b19–20; cf. Alcinous, *Did.*

10.164.29–31). God cannot be identified with an Intellect simply because, following the principle that like knows like, he would then be attainable by intellection. What this alternative position proposes instead is the identification of the first principle with a “one beyond being” from Plato’s first deduction about the “one” in the *Parmenides* (137–142a).⁵ The “apophatic” view of the first principle is deduced from the following two of Plato’s postulates: first, that unity is not identical with anything but unity and thus cannot be or imply many; and second, that every attempt at determination amounts, in fact, to negation. Following these postulates, the problem of the passage from unity to plurality cannot be resolved by a gradual deduction of contingents from the rational principle. Logical deduction must give way to a mythical narrative that goes beyond the immanent self-deployment of the divine Intellect to reach the pre-symbolic stage of pure potentiality and the primordial freedom from any sort of determination. Starting from this initial point, the paradox of the transcendent One which, while remaining unchanged and totally simple, manages to create the finite number of subordinate levels of reality is resolved by resorting to analogies borrowed from such diverse discursive domains as biology, physics, geometry, arithmetic, human psychology, and sexual reproduction. The passage from the original unity to multiplicity is now portrayed as the initial cleavage, doubling, emanation, irradiation, extension, or self-

⁵ This position, popular in the Neopythagorean circles of the Hellenistic and Roman imperial periods (Pseudo-Brotinus, Alexander Polyhistor, Eudorus of Alexandria, Moderatus of Gades, Nicomachus of Gerasa, Theon of Smyrna) and later appropriated by Plotinus, seems to have already been formulated in the Old Academy by Speusippus. For the ontological interpretation of Plato’s deductions in the *Parmenides*, considered a distinctive feature of Neoplatonism, and for its Old Academic and Neopythagorean sources, see Eric R. Dodds, “The *Parmenides* of Plato and the Origin of the Neoplatonic ‘One,’” in *CQ* 22 (1928): 129–42; Glen R. Morrow and John M. Dillon, *Proclus’ Commentary on Plato’s Parmenides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), xxix–xxxiv; Reginald E. Allen, *Plato’s Parmenides* (rev. ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 218–24; Luc Brisson, *Platon. Timée–Critias* (4th ed.; Paris: Flammarion, 1999), 285–91; John Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 BC)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003); and numerous contributions by Halfwassen, “Speusippus und die Unendlichkeit des Einen. Ein neues Speusipp-Testimonium bei Proklos und seine Bedeutung,” in *AGPh* 74 (1992): 43–73, “Speusipp und die metaphysische Deutung von Platons ‘‘Parmenides,’’” in: *Einheit und Vielheit. Festschrift für K. Bormann*, ed. L. Hagemann and R. Gleis (Religionswissenschaftliche Studien 30; Würzburg–Altenberge: Echter 1993), “Monismus und Dualismus in Platons Prinzipienlehre,” in *Bochumer Philosophische Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 2 (1997): 1–21. Eudorus of Alexandria, for example, views the Platonic distinction between a “one beyond being” and “a one-that-is” as the articulation of two highest ontological levels: the One, which is “the principle of all,” and two “secondary elementary principles” of existent things, the Monad and the Dyad (Simpl. *In Arist. Phys.* 181, 7 ff. = frags. 3–5 Mazzarelli). Halfwassen (1977) 20, points to a crucial distinction in Eudorus between the first One, a transcendent principle (*archê*), and the subsequent pair of the monadic and dyadic elements (*stoikheia*) constitutive of and immanent in reality.

cognition—the very same cluster of metaphors for whose employment Hegel criticized Plotinus, the best known representative of ancient monism:

But out of the First all proceeds, owing to the One's revealing itself; that is the connection with creation and all production. Yet the Absolute cannot be conceived as a creative if it is determinate as an abstract, and is not rather comprehended as the One which has energy in itself. This transition to the Second is thus not made by Plotinus philosophically or dialectically, but the necessity of it is expressed in representations and images. Thus he says (*Enn.* III 8.10)...“The one absolute Good is a source which has no other source, but is the principle for all streams, so that it is never exhausted by these, but as source remains at rest in itself,” and thus contains these streams as such in itself; so that they, “flowing out in one direction and another, have yet not flowed away, but know beforehand whence and whither they will flow”.⁶

The selection of analogies in the *Apocryphon of John* was determined by the imagery employed to convey the hypothesis of God as pure, infinite, and undetermined substance. These images—“Monarchy,” “the Father of the Entirety,” “the perfect invisible virginal spirit,” “the immeasurable light,” “the holy and undefiled purity,” “the pure luminous water,” a pure “gaze” not yet confronted by any object, and a self-contained “will” which wants nothing—provide the starting point for the narrative of procession, articulated as a series of middle steps in a downward movement toward the opposite ontological pole. The final stage of entropy and stagnation is consequently represented as the self-aggrandizing tyranny of an illegitimate impostor (Ialdabaoth), as the slackness of the “counterfeit spirit,” as stagnant waters of the bottomless chaos, as the “darkness of ignorance,” and as dark matter, a disorderly substrate in which the blind demiurge shapes the phenomenal world, the realm of deceptive and ungrounded *simulacra*.

One group of these metaphors emphasizes God's superabundance and the excess of creative potential—for example, the spring containing an ever-flowing stream of water, the seed growing into a fully differentiated living being, or the radiant sun emanating profusely its rays of light. Among these purely “monistic” metaphors, all of which insist on continuity of matter and its infinite divisibility, the *Apocryphon of John* clearly favors the analogy with light. God is initially a pure and immeasurable light capable of limitless extension. As it spreads outwards, it loses its original intensity and purity. God's first emanation, whose personal name is Barbelo, is the “likeness of the light,” and the offspring of her subsequent union with the first God, the Self-Originate or Christ, is termed as a “luminous spark.” This spark of light is further divided among the four luminaries presiding over

⁶ Georg W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co, 1894), 2:415–16.

the spiritual aeons. As the process comes down to Sophia, the lowest aeon in the spiritual realm, light has already lost so much of its “brightness” that Sophia “grows dark.” Her light-element then blends with darkness and turns into fire—the realm of Ialdabaoth, the ignorant demiurge of the visible world.

The second group of analogies appears more important for identifying “dualistic” features in the *Apocryphon of John*. These analogies were chosen from three discursive domains: from the Stoic theory of the self-transforming God identified with the vitalizing “pneumatic” principle; from the medley of the Stoic and Platonist views of cognitive process and concept formation; and from the sphere of natural philosophy and its investigations into mechanisms of biological reproduction. What is emphasized in all these cases is the pre-symbolic dualism of opposite drives in the Absolute, or the inner tension between the two antagonistic moves—of contraction and expansion, or of self-preservation and self-differentiation—which can be resolved, yet only temporarily, through a symbolic externalization of God’s infinite potential.⁷ This infinite potential, however, can never be adequately expressed in a finite multitude of predicates, so that every attempt at establishing the stable relationship between God *qua* subject and his predicative content is destined to end in “miscarriage”—that is, in revealing the dark residue within the Absolute that resists any limitative definition.

The choice of *pneuma*-analogy seems particularly suitable here. This dynamic continuum which, according to the Stoics, pervades and informs all reality, comprises within itself two simultaneous yet opposite movements of contraction and expansion, the former producing “unity and substance” and the second “quantities and qualities” (Nemesius, *Nat. hom.* 70.6–71.4).⁸ In the inward movement of contraction, the divine “breath” stabilizes itself as a substance of all things, whereas in the opposite movement of expansion it

⁷ This initial duality of opposite drives in the first principle corresponds in Stoic cosmology to the indeterminate state of god (*pneuma*), prior to creation of the world-order, when he “has the whole substance as its commanding faculty” (Orig. *Contra Celsum* 4.14) and is not yet split from within into two separate principles, active (Intellect) and passive (bare substance). The same duality can also be expressed by mathematical analogy, postulated already in the Old Academy (Speusippus) and further refined in Neoplatonism. The Absolute, identified with the Platonic One, is “unlimited” (*apeiron*) in two opposite senses: as an absolute minimum, “being the limit of all things and not having any other limit,” and as an immeasurable magnitude, in the sense of “being untraversable” by any other measuring limit (Proclus, *In Parm.* 1118, 10–19 Cousin); cf. Halfwassen, “Speusippus und die Unendlichkeit des Einen,” 43–73.

⁸ Nemesius’s passage runs as follows: “If they should say, as the Stoics do, that there exists in bodies a kind of tensile movement which moves simultaneously inwards and outwards, the outward movement producing quantities and qualities and the inward one unity and substance, we must ask them (since every movement issues from some power) what this power is and in what substance it consists.”

externalizes itself in a series of qualitatively distinct modes—divine intelligence, or mind, in rational entities, soul in animals, physique in plants, and tenor in inanimate objects—and thereby loses the firm ground of its initial stability. Applied to the *Apocryphon of John*, this dynamic analogy yields the following set of God's self-transformations. At the initial stage, the absolute first principle, also called the "pure virginal spirit," is a dynamic continuum that, as it begins to expand, undergoes a series of modifications in the degree of tension (*tonos*) and density and becomes, in the order of increased slackness (*atonia*), Intellect (Christ the Self-Originate and his spiritual realm), Soul (Sophia and her interstitial sphere), and Physique endowed with irrational impulse and imagination (Ialdabaoth and the imaginary phenomenal realm over which he rules). The hierarchical structure of the world in the *Apocryphon of John* results, in short, from the outward movement of the divine "breath" (*pneuma*), accompanied by a gradual loss of its original *tonos* down to the "entropic" state of stagnation, slackness, and disorder (the "counterfeit" or "adversary" *pneuma* inherent in matter).⁹

The epistemological model offers a similar scenario. The God of the *Apocryphon of John* is conceived as initially an intellect in potentiality, which does not receive any information from the "senses" and has nothing to conceptualize. Only upon perceiving his "image" in a luminous, mirror-like substrate of his own indefinite substance can God disengage himself from the initial indifference, attain the first vague notion (Ennoia-Barbelo) of the "self," and change into a self-reflecting Intellect (Christ the Self-Originate) capable of formulating its own dispositions ("aeons"). The sum total of these individual traits is symbolized in the figure of Sophia, the "wisdom" of God and the last aeon of the Pleroma. The irreducible gap between God's initial potential and its inadequate symbolic representation, manifested in Sophia's attempt to think of "the invisible Spirit" by means of "discursive reasoning" (*Enthumêsis* II 9:25–28, III 14:9–12), results in miscarriage—that is, in the appearance of dark matter identified with the "darkness of ignorance" (II 13:24–25, BG 45:14–16). Sophia will later act in this product of her own ignorance in the guise of Epinoia, or practical wisdom, assisting Ialdabaoth, the creator of phenomenal reality, in his production of the realm of unfounded and illusory *simulacra*.

Sexual imagery borrowed from the contemporary biological theories of natural reproduction has clear dualist overtones. Following the mechanics of generative process, the transcendent first principle disengages itself from

⁹ Consider, for example, the case of the first-born man, the "animate" Adam. The product of Ialdabaoth's modeling, he had been born weak and incapable of moving, and it was only when Sophia's "power," or the divine *pneuma*, was blown into him that "[his] body moved, became strong, and shone" (II 19:10–33, BG 50:11–52:1).

blissful indifference and becomes the Father of Entirety who provides his female consort Ennoia-Barbelo, described in the longer version of the *Apocryphon* as “the Womb (*mêtra*) of Entirety” (NCH II 5:5), with seed or the formal cause. In this way, God assumes the role of an active male cause that contributes both the form and the source of movement for a new individual nature—a perfect male offspring, the “only-begotten” Self-Originate, or Christ, endowed with individual traits of his Father. The subsequent production of other natural beings (aeons) in the spiritual realm stems from the analogous mating, this time of the Self-Originate Christ and his “coactors” (Intellect, Reason, Will) with the individual feminine dispositions of Barbelo (Eternal Life, Foreknowledge, Incorruptibility, all feminine nouns in Greek). At the next stage, another female character, Sophia, the last of the twelve aeons fabricated by the Self-Originate, commits an illicit act. In the manner of the Aristotelian “unruly matter” (*GA* 4.3.767b–769b), she attempts at conceiving without a consort. This futile attempt at parthenogenesis results in a miscarriage, or the discharge of menstrual blood (“dark matter”), the only thing that Sophia, being a female, can contribute to generation. The outcome in this case is an ugly, dark, and formless product—the future ruler of the visible world, Ialdabaoth. As for Sophia, she will repent for having fallen from God’s grace and, by intervention of her would-be consort, the Holy Spirit, eventually rise up to the interstitial zone between the divine realm and the sublunary world of Ialdabaoth—that is, to the intermediate level of the World-Soul, the immediate transmitter of forms into matter. Finally, the lowest level of the edifice, or the visible world, comes to exist out of the union of Ialdabaoth, the supplier of “form,” and a formless corporeal substrate.

A rather dualistic scenario seems to be building up here, where each subsequent level of a multiple-tiered universe, with the exception of Sophia’s miscarried attempt to conceive on her own, results from the mating of the two opposite yet complementary principles that, in their turn, derive from an analogous conjugal couple (“syzygy”) at a higher level.¹⁰ The following diagram captures both aspects of the model: its generative, “dualist” component and the outcome of derivative process, *viz.* the tripartite cosmological structure reminiscent of Plato’s world-hypothesis from the *Timaeus* (Intelligible Forms–World Soul–World Body).

¹⁰ The same law of biological reproduction governs the procession of aeons in the “Valentinian” systems; cf. Clem. Alex. *Exc. Theod.* 32.1: “In the Pleroma, since there is a unity, each of the aeons has its own pleroma (fullness), which is a conjugal couple. What proceeds from a couple, they say, are pleromas, whereas what proceeds from one are images.”

Principles	Derivative Causes	Effects (Levels of Reality)
Transcendent One		
Father and Barbelo	→ 10 Aeons with Christ	INTELLIGIBLE REALM
Christ and Incorruptility	→ 12 additional Aeons with Sophia	
Sophia alone	→ Ialdabaoth (Irrational Soul)	ANIMATE REALM
Fallen Sophia and Consort	→ Heavenly Sophia (World-Soul)	
Ialdabaoth and Matter	→ Rulers of the Visible World	MATERIAL REALM

Even in this clearly dualistic system of causes in the *Apocryphon's* cosmology, the primal polarity between the Father of Entirety and Barbelo is reflected back into the original tension within the *single* first principle—the “perfect invisible *virginal* (*parthenikon*) spirit” (II 4:34–35) that “searches for its own self in the fullness” of its mirror-like luminous substance (BG 25:9–11). At this non-productive and pre-conceptual stage in the life of the Absolute, no split has yet been made between two halves (subject vs. object, active vs. passive cause, form vs. matter) so as to allow one to conceive of God in terms of *coincidentia oppositorum*. The God of the *Apocryphon of John* is not the highest genus that encompasses all sorts of opposites, including the distinction between “male” and “female,” but the abyss of pure freedom with no predicate property attached to the void of its infinite potential. In order to express this impossible notion of the creative will that wants nothing in terms of biological reproduction, some “Gnostic” systems similar to the *Apocryphon's* world-hypothesis introduced the term characteristic of the language of eminence (*huperochê*)—“Fore-Father.”

The Lord of All, it is not called “Father” (*patêr*), but rather Fore-Father (*pro-patôr*). It is the Father of the beginning (*arkhê*) for those that will be shown, but, in fact, it is the Fore-Father without beginning (*anarkhos*). Seeing its own self within itself as in a mirror, it is shown forth resembling itself. And its image revealed itself as the Fore-Father, as a divine Father, and as its face-to-face, for its stand before the face of the Preexistent Unbegotten Father. It is of equal time as the Light that is before it, but it is not equal to it in power. (*Soph. Jes. Chr.* BG 90:15–91:13; cf. NHC III 98:22–99:13; *Eugnostos* III 74:20–75:6; *POxy.* 1081r, 36–50 Barry).

Cosmology: Opposites and a Middle Term

Just as the opposite principles at work in every segment of reality have their ultimate source in a unity transcending all oppositional determina-

tions, so also the interaction of these pairs of principles yields not the world divided in two spatial domains (e.g. light vs. darkness, or invisible forms and perceptible particulars) but a tripartite universe with the soul-level as a “middle term.” The *Apocryphon of John* divides reality into three domains—the intelligible realm of the “Pleroma” ruled by the Self-Originate Christ, the heavenly sphere controlled by Sophia, and the sublunary world governed by Ialdabaoth—to which correspond, respectively, three distinctive substances (spirit, soul, flesh), three presiding powers (Intellect, Rational Soul, Irrational Soul) with their specific cognitive capacity (intellection, reasoning, imagination), and three classes of human beings (spiritual, animate, fleshly). Furthermore, each of these three domains is expressed in a distinct discursive mode—the language of speculative philosophy, the symbolic language of wisdom theosophy, and the materialist language of historical contingency—each assigned to a different, and only partially compatible, cultural traditions: Platonism interspersed with the elements from the Johannine gospel, Jewish Wisdom literature, and the Mosaic law.

A similar structuring principle guides Plato’s composition of the universe in the *Timaeus*. Here, too, the intermediate stage between the two extremes, viz., intelligible forms and sensible particulars, is postulated as logical necessity. For Plato, opposites are incompatible alternatives that cannot be predicated of the same subject “in the same respect, in the same relation, and at the same time” (*Rep.* 436b8 ff.). The rule of mutual incompatibility does not apply only to opposite qualities, terms, and propositions, but is also valid for opposite things: some are exhaustive alternatives that exclude intermediates (limit and unlimited), and some again are contraries (god and man) that admit alternatives (demon). As Diotima explains to Socrates in the *Banquet* (201e ff.), wisdom and folly are not mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive contradictories, for they allow a middle term (right opinion). The same distinction serves as the founding principle of Plato’s cosmology, psychology, and anthropology. The coexistence of intelligible forms and sensible particulars requires the intercession of some harmonizing element—a mathematical mean, a common substrate, or an intermediary substance possessing the characteristics of both opposites (the world soul). Similarly, the soul does and experiences opposite things—it comprehends by means of the body and reasons by means of the intellect. In short, dualism is for Plato the doctrine of opposite yet inexhaustive alternatives. On the one hand, it is the simplest principle of classification and the easiest solution to the problem of disorder, decay, and evil in the world. On the other hand, this kind of “mitigated” dualism furnishes the rational argument to “save the phenomena”—for how could anything come into existence out of the two mutually exclusive principles if their natural tendency is to anni-

hilate one other?¹¹ The insertion of an intermediary entity is thus a trademark of Platonist cosmology—a common theme that occurs not only in the works of Plato and his immediate successors (Xenocrates), but also among his spiritual heirs, both pagan (Plutarch) and Christian (Origen):

Hence the god, when he began to put together the body of the universe, set about making it of fire and earth. But two things cannot be satisfactorily united without a third; for there must be some bond between them drawing them together. (Plato, *Timaeus* 31b)

Xenocrates says that there are three forms of existence (*ousia*): the sensible, the intelligible, and that which is composite of these two and opinable. Of these, the sensible is that which exists below heaven, the intelligible is that which belongs to all things outside heaven, and the opinable and composite is that of heaven itself; for it is visible by sense perception, but intelligible by means of astronomy (Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 7.147 ff.):

For even if it is a characteristic of sameness to be different from difference and of difference again to be the same as itself, mutual participation of this kind has no fruitful result; but a third term is required, a kind of matter serving as a receptacle for both and being modified by them, and is that God first compounded. (Plutarch, *De animae procreatione in Timaeo* 26.1025F–1026A).

This [i.e., dualism] is the view of the majority and of the wisest.... Anaxagoras posits Mind and the Unlimited, Aristotle Form and Privation, while Plato, often in a veiled an hidden manner, calls the first of the opposed principles Sameness and the second Difference. But in the *Laws*, being now older, he states, not figuratively or symbolically, but in a literal sense, that the universe is moved not by one soul but probably by more, and at least no fewer than two.... He leaves room for a certain third nature also to exist between them, one which is neither inanimate, nor without reason nor unable to move of itself, as some think, but which depends on the other two, and constantly desires and longs for and pursues what is better. (Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 46–48.369D–371A)

From this soul-substance, then, acting as a mediator between God and the flesh—for it was not possible for the nature of God to mingle with a body apart from some mediator (*non enim possibile erat dei naturam corpori sine mediatore misceri*)—there is born, as we said, the God-man, the intermediary being that substance to which it was not totally against nature to assume a body. (Origen, *De principiis* 2.6.3)

Plato's important insight into the nature of opposites seems to lie in the background of the *Apocryphon's* triadic division of the universe, with "Soul" serving as an intermediary and having the qualities of both the intelligible and sensible realms. Another postulate borrowed from Plato is

¹¹ See Plato, *Phaedo* 102e: "Nor will any of the contraries, while still being what it was, at the same time come to be, and be, its own opposite. If that befalls it, either it goes away or it perishes."

that of an analogical relationship between the universe and man. Just as the universe is tripartite, so also is humanity, by the law of analogy between macrocosm and microcosm. In both cases, the soul-level represents the battleground for the struggle for mastery between the two mutually exclusive extremes. At the macrocosmic plane, Sophia, the universal Soul of the Gnostics, strives to unite with Christ, her consort, and return to her lost home in the spiritual realm, but remains at the same time imprisoned in the visible world of Ialdabaoth, the product of her own downward inclination. At the microcosmic plane, the individual soul serves as a battleground for the struggle between the Spirit of Life issued from Sophia and the Counterfeit Spirit of Death brought in by Ialdabaoth and his authorities.

Anthropology: Philonic Connections

The structural analogy the *Apocryphon of John* postulates between the organization of the universe and the constitution of man requires a more detailed treatment. Every human being is portrayed as consisting of two incompatible elements, spirit and flesh, with soul serving as a necessary link, a *tertium quid*, between the contraries. In the narrative of the *Apocryphon of John*, this triadic constitution is “explained” in mythological terms as the generation of the three successive “types” of Adam: (i) the archetypal human being, called Adam, Adamas, or Geradamas (BG 34:19–20; III 12:24–13:16; II 8:28–9:11), who dwells in the spiritual realm; (ii) the animate Adam, modeled “after the image of God and after the likeness” of Ialdabaoth and his authorities (II 15:1–4; cf. BG 48:10–14), by reference to Gen 1:26–27; and (iii) the “fleshly” Adam, clothed by Ialdabaoth’s rulers in the material body, clearly an interpretation of the “second account of creation” in Gen 2:7¹² interspersed with the Platonic imagery of the body as “the tomb” and “the bond of forgetfulness” (II 20:35–21:14; BG 54:14–55:15). Depending on which of the three elements gains upper hand in this mixture, the posterity of Adam will fall into one of the three groups: spiritual, animate, or fleshly.

The exact relationship between these constitutive elements of human being, and between the three distinct types of mankind, is determined by inserting a compatible Platonist division of man into intellect, soul, and body. The human soul mirrors the nature and composition of the World Soul.¹³ It

¹² “God molded the human being as dust from the earth, and he inbreathed onto his face the breath of life.”

¹³ See Plutarch’s free paraphrase of what Plato said of the composition of the human soul, made out of the same constituents as its cosmic counterpart (*Tim.* 41d–e, 69c–d), in *De virt. mor.* 441F: “The soul of man...is a portion or a copy (*meros ti ê mimêma*) of the world-soul and is

is a sort of receptacle for the opposites, an intermediary between god and matter, having a nature sensitive and akin to both, simultaneously laying hold on matter and striving for the divine source. This capacity of the soul to move in two opposite directions is related by Plato and the Middle Platonists to its spirited (*thumoeides*) or mettlesome part. According to Plutarch, one of the most prolific exegetes of Plato's philosophy:

Just as among letters the semivowels are intermediate between the mutes and the vowels by having more sound than the former and less than the latter, so in the soul of man the mettlesome part is not purely affective but frequently has a mental image of what is fair, though one commingled with what is irrational, the yearning for retribution. (*Quaest. Plat.* 9.1.1008C–D, trans. Cherniss)

Whichever of the two paths the soul decides to take will depend on the outcome of the struggle for mastery between its two other capacities or parts. One is the spirited, irrational part, which tends to unite with body, and the other is the rational part, which tends to free itself from bodily passions and commune with intelligible reality. In the *Apocryphon of John*, this struggle for mastery manifests itself at the cosmological level as the conflict between Ialdabaoth, the disorderly Soul inherent in corporeal matter, and Sophia who, upon repenting for her wrongful act, plays the role of the rational World Soul located above the corporeal realm. At the level of the individual soul, this struggle is portrayed as that between the two spirits—the Spirit of Life originating from the spiritual realm and the Counterfeit Spirit residing in matter:

In the case of those others [who have not known to whom they belong]...the counterfeit spirit has increased within them while they were going astray. And it weighs down the soul, and beguiles it into the work of wickedness, and casts it into forgetfulness. And after it has come forth it is given into the charge of the authorities, who exist because of the ruler [i.e. Ialdabaoth]. And they bind it with bonds and cast it into the prison. And they go around with it until it awakens out of forgetfulness and takes *gnosis* unto itself. (II 26:33–27:10; BG 68:13–69:13)

The opposite Spirit of Life and salvation is called Sophia's "power." This is a portion of divine luminous substance that, being infinitely divisible, enters the soul of every human being—the very same "power" Ialdabaoth had first stolen from his mother and then blew into Adam's animate body:

Indeed, the power will descend unto everyone—for without it no one can stand up. And after they are begotten, if the spirit of life increases—for the power comes to them—it strengthens that soul, and nothing can mislead it into the works of wickedness. (II 26:12–19; BG 67:4–14)

joined together in numerical proportions corresponding to those which govern this one (i.e. the world-soul)"; cf. M. Baltes, "La dottrina dell'anima in Plutarco," *Elenchos* 21 (2000): 254–58.

Striking similarities between the opposite spirits in the *Apocryphon of John* and the Qumran instruction on the two spiritual beings, the spirit of truth and the spirit of wickedness (1QS III:13–IV:26), have not passed unnoticed by scholars.¹⁴ Affinities are striking indeed, yet the hypothesis of a direct borrowing does not seem as plausible as that of a common source. In all likelihood, this source is Jewish sapiential tradition—more specifically, its teaching that the radical antagonism of the opposite forces pervades all levels of creation, ethical and physical, cosmological and psychological. As stated by Ben Sira, “All things are twofold, one opposite to the other, and he has made nothing deficient” (Sir 33:9).¹⁵ In the case of the *Apocryphon of John*, this multidimensional dualistic pattern is incorporated into an equally pervasive tripartite framework borrowed from contemporary Platonism. This fusion of Wisdom literature and Platonist philosophy is very much in tune with the basic exegetical principle of the *Apocryphon of John* and of Gnosticism in general, which treats these two traditions as contiguous and structurally compatible positions capable of blending and filling each other’s gaps. An important intermediary in this process of the creative fusion of heterogeneous traditions might have been Philo of Alexandria, whose exegesis of Exodus 12:23 (“The Lord will pass over that door and will not let the destroyer enter your houses to strike”), preserved only in Armenian translation, offers an attractive intertextual link between Plato, Wisdom literature, the *Instruction on the Two Spirits* from Qumran, and the *Apocryphon of John*:

But as for the deeper meaning, this must be said. Into every soul at its very birth there enter two powers, the salutary and the destructive. If the salutary one is victorious and prevails, the opposite one is too weak to see. And if the latter prevails, no profit at all or little is obtained from the salutary one. Through these powers the world too was created. People call them by other names: the salutary one they call powerful and beneficent, and the opposite one unbounded and destructive.... But the nation is a mixture of both, from which the heavens and the entire world as a whole have received this mixture. Now, sometimes the evil becomes greater in this mixture, and hence [all] live in torment, harm, ignominy, contention, battle and bodily illness.... And this mixture is in both the wicked man and the wise man, but not in the same way. For the souls of foolish men have the unbounded and destructive rather than the powerful and salutary [power], and it is full of misery when it dwells with earthly creatures. But the prudent and noble [soul] rather receives the powerful and salutary [power] and, on the contrary, possesses in itself good fortune and happiness, being carried around with the heaven because of kinship with it. (*Quaest. Ex.* 1.23)

¹⁴ Cf. e.g. Wolf-Dieter Hauschild, *Gottes Geist und der Mensch: Studies zur frühchristlichen Pneumatologie* (Munich: C. Kaiser, 1972).

¹⁵ For the sapiential background of the multidimensional dualistic pattern in 1QS, see Frey, “Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought,” 295–300.

Conclusion

My search for dualistic patterns and ideas in the *Apocryphon of John*, one of the most comprehensive and fully elaborated versions of the classic Gnostic myth, has yielded the following results.

- (i) Regarding the doctrine of first principles, the *Apocryphon of John* combines the radical monism, which posits a One, or Unity, at the top of a multiple-tiered universe, with the Old Academic doctrine of two principles, the Monad and the Dyad, from which all subsequent tiers are to be derived. There may be some good philosophical reasons for simultaneously proposing these seemingly incompatible alternatives—most notably, Plato’s distinction drawn in the first two hypotheses of the dialogue *Parmenides* between a “one” beyond being, absolutely transcendent and incapable of generating anything, and the existing “one” that, insofar as partaking of being, becomes a pair of opposites, viz., “one and being,” limited and unlimited, sameness and otherness. But once it had postulated this simple principle beyond being and any determination, the *Apocryphon of John* had to solve the problem facing all monistic systems—that of accounting for God’s passage from infinity to finitude, from simplicity to multiplicity, from absolute potentiality to concrete actuality. One solution was found in the Stoic theory of the self-transforming God identified with the vitalizing breath or *pneuma*. According to the Stoics, the divine *pneuma* in its purest and most refined state is characterized by a simultaneous motion in opposite directions, outwards and inwards. While the first kind of movement produces “unity and substance,” the second, in turn, generates “quantities and qualities” (Nemesius, *Nat. hom.* 70.6–71.4). This duality of opposite movements, this endless oscillation between contraction and expansion, results in a debilitating deadlock that will be resolved as soon as the movement outwards prevails and God, the vitalizing “breath,” begins to manifest its predicative content—first as “intellect,” then as “soul,” and finally as bodily “physique.” This bold juxtaposition of Stoic monism with the Academic doctrine of two supreme principles is effected, in the metaphorical jargon of the *Apocryphon of John*, by blending the monistic imagery of expansion, overflow, and irradiation from a single indefinite source with the dualistic language of natural reproduction.
- (ii) The universe of the *Apocryphon of John* has three basic levels—intelligible or spiritual, animate, and fleshly or corporeal. Each level is the product of a respective pair of principles—one male, providing form, and the other feminine, contributing matter to creation. But how can opposites act upon each other? Clearly, these pairs of gen-

dered principles are considered as simultaneously opposite and complementary. Oppositeness, according to Aristotle, means both negation and privation; if the latter, then, in Aristotle's words, "there also comes to be some underlying nature in respect to which privation is stated" (*Meta* 3.2.1004a9 ff.). Viewed from this standpoint, the feminine principle simultaneously opposes and underlies its male counterpart—that is, it figures not only as the active principle of disorder, but also as a material principle of generation.

- (iii) Just as the universe is a tripartite construction, with "Soul" as the mediating entity partaking in both the intelligible and sensible realms, so also is humanity, following the law of analogy between macrocosm and microcosm. In both cases, the soul represents the battleground for the struggle for mastery between the two extremes. Just as Sophia, the universal Soul of the Gnostics, strives to unite with Christ, her consort, and return to her lost home in the spiritual realm, but remains at the same time imprisoned in the visible world of Ialdabaoth, the product of her own downward inclination, so is the individual soul the battleground for the struggle between the Spirit of Life issued from Sophia and the Counterfeit Spirit of Death brought in by Ialdabaoth and his authorities. This is clearly an instance of ethically oriented cosmic dualism, but one that, following the Platonic principle of contradiction, requires the insertion of an intermediate entity. This kind of "mitigated" dualism is the legacy of Plato and his followers, from Aristotle down to Middle Platonist philosophers (particularly Philo and Plutarch), and it closely resembles their opposites-and-substrate theory of becoming.

Werner Sundermann

What Has Come Down to Us From Manicheism?

with an Appendix by Prods Oktor Skjærvø

If someone were to ask me what part of the Manichean heritage I consider worth being preserved, I would say: the remains that bear witness to its artistic sensibility. Here I find myself in agreement with the way Manicheism is portrayed in the literary traditions from the Islamic period, which have preserved a respectful memory of Mani as painter.¹ Unfortunately, however, very few Manichean works of representative art, however beautiful they may be, survive, and, when they do, they are mostly fragmentary. The exquisite beauty of Manichean calligraphy makes up for this only to a limited extent, and of Manichean music we get a fleeting idea from the way the cantilation of hymns is indicated in some manuscripts. For us, therefore, the artistry of the Manicheans can be comprehended only through its religious literature, especially its hymns and psalms. Here we can listen to the complaints of the Living Soul or the soul of a dying person couched in an expressive language full of images, and nature in the beautiful springtime of the Bema festival is praised in an exalted lyricism that probably has no parallel in other religious literatures of antiquity. Finally, Manichean parable literature testifies to its skillful adaptation of motifs from contemporary story telling.

¹ Jes P. Asmussen, *Xth āstvānīfr: Studies in Manichaeism* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1965), 10; Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections: A Comprehensive Catalogue of Manichaean Artifacts Belonging to the Berlin State Museums of the Prussian Cultural Foundation, Museum of Indian Art, and the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, Deposited in the Berlin State Library of the Prussian Cultural Foundation* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 4, 7. Since this was written, several Manichean paintings have come to light in Japan. See Takao Moriasu, “日本に現存するマニ教絵画の発見とその歴史的背景” [Nippon ni genson suru manikyō kaiga no hakken to sono rekishiteki haikai] (English title: “The Discovery of Manichaean Paintings in Japan and Their Historical Background”), 内陸アジア史研究 (Inner Asian studies) 25 (2010): 1–17, 11 pls. Yutaka Yoshida, “A Newly Recognized Manichaean Painting: Manichaean Daēnā from Japan.” In *Pensée grecque et sagesse d’Orient: Hommage à Michel Tardieu*. Edited Mohammad-Ali Amir Moezzi et al. (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 697–714. Yutaka Yoshida, 新出マニ教絵画の形而上 [Shinshutsu manikyō kaiga no keijijō] (“Metaphysics of the newly appeared Manichaean paintings”; the English title differs: “Cosmogony and Church History Depicted in the Newly Discovered Chinese Manichaean Paintings”), *Yamato bunka. Semi-Annual Journal of Eastern Arts* 121 (Special issue on the newly discovered Manichaean paintings; 2010): 1–34, 9 pls. (with English summary).

This is not, however, the topic of my presentation. Rather, I shall discuss three examples showing how the Manichean religion, now faded out of existence, has left its traces in the general conscience and judgment of people in our time: “Manichean” today, “Manichean” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Manicheism as the true Christianity.

“Manichean” Today

On March 8, 2002, an article about the foreign policy of American President George W. Bush written by Michael Shannon appeared in the *Democratic Underground.com* under the headline “The Manichean President,” a neologism that was probably understood by few readers. In the same vein, in an article that appeared on September 11, 2002, in the *Guardian Unlimited*, Simon Schama wrote, under the caption “The dead and the guilty,” as follows “on the questions Americans should be asking on the anniversary of September 11”:

If the calculated mass murder of 3,000 innocent civilians, from 80 countries, many of them Muslims, just ordinary working people going about their business on a sunny September morning, was not an act of absolute evil, then I have no idea what is. The more serious problem with presidential rhetoric was that the Manichean struggle between good and evil, freedom and terror, was not just the beginning but apparently also the end of any sustained attempt to articulate just what, in this particular life-and-death struggle, was truly at stake.

I could easily cite further examples from the *Observer*, *The Hindu*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*, but, clearly, the word “Manichean” has become fashionable. Among the numerous hits produced by an internet search (American *Manichean*, British *Manichaeism*), let me mention the following two. In *New Politics* 9/3 (Summer 2003), in a discussion with Mark Bould, China Miéville characterized Tolkien’s world as “very Manichean in its morality”; and a reviewer of *The Matrix Reloaded* (at aionioszoe.blogspot.com, 3 June 2003) found “something of a Manichean or Zoroastrian world view” in it. Most examples of this modern use of the term “Manichean,” however, are far from any genuinely Manichean associations, notably when the typically dualistic “black-and-white thinking” is used to characterize racism of the American tinge. Nevertheless, the specialists—historians of religions or philologists—who are familiar with Manicheism as a religion known from antiquity and surviving in Ming China up to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,² though now long gone, must also get used to this new application of the term.

²Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China* (2d rev. and exp. ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 301–4.

However that may be, today “everybody,” even those for whom “Manichean” produces no clear associations or who understand the word differently from the specialists, realizes what it means as a modern catchword, namely, a polarized view of things that recognizes only black and white, good and evil, light and darkness, like the president in *Independence Day* who saved the world from the attack of aliens or the recent president who sets himself against the Axis of Evil.

But what does all this have to do with the historical Manicheism, with the teachings of salvation of an Aramaic founder of religion who was born in southern Mesopotamia in 216 C.E. and died in Belabad in southwestern Iran as the prisoner of the Sasanian king Wahram I (273–76) between 274 and 277? It is true that Mani involved himself in the politics of his time; according to Manichean sources, he won the favor of two kings, Shapur I (241–72) and his son Ohrmezd I (272–73), spent some time at the court, and, with royal permission, propagated his religion throughout the land.

What Mani taught, though, was no political doctrine, but a religion. This religion was a dualistic thought system, the teaching that there are two original principles. The term “dualism” itself refers to a relatively modern typological concept, fashioned by Thomas Hyde³ for another dualistic religion, Zoroastrianism, which contains the historically earliest evidence for dualistic thinking.⁴

The common ground between these two dualistic religions, Zoroastrianism (as it was at the time) and Manicheism, is the teaching that two worlds, one divine all good and one demonic all evil, confront one another from time immemorial, and neither has arisen from the other, not evil from good, nor good from evil. This is a radical theodicy, which, in its ultimate consequence, defends the goodness and wisdom of God at the price of his omnipotence. It is in obvious contrast to the familiar Jewish, Christian, and Islamic theodicies, in which the devil is seen as a fallen angel of God and the fall of man as the work of a seducer in animal form.

What distinguishes these two dualistic religions and to some extent gives Manichean dualism a greater existential weight is its characteristic way of viewing the world as an enemy and as a prison for the demons, as well as

³Thomas Hyde, *Historia Religionis veterum Persarum eorumque Magorum* (Oxford: Sheldon, 1700), chap. 9.

⁴William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion. Eastern and Western Thought* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1996), 182–83. See also Michael Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathustra* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 2:694–95; “Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) und die Erfindung des europäischen Neomanichäismus,” in *Studia Manichaica IV. Internationaler Kongreß zum Manichäismus, Berlin, 14.–18. Juli 1997*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick, Werner Sundermann, and Peter Zieme (Berlin: Akademie, 2000), 588–89; Guy (Gedaliahu) G. Stroumsa, “Thomas Hyde and the Birth of Zoroastrian Studies,” *JSAI 26 (Studies in Honour of Shaul Shaked)*, vol. 1; 2002), 216–30, especially 227.

for the Light World Soul and, consequently, for the souls of all human beings. Zoroastrianism never went this far. It may have known, and even been the first to create, the picture of the world as a prison for demons, but on no account was the world a prison for the soul, and Zoroastrian thought is always optimistic with a fundamentally positive worldview.

Because of its pessimistic worldview, Manicheism has repeatedly been compared with the Gnostic systems of late antiquity and has also been called Gnostic. Yet hardly any other Gnostic system shares with Manicheism the ontological radicalism of its dualism. In the Gnostic systems, evil is depicted as the final stage of an emanation process involving a gradual movement downward from God with accompanying degeneration.

There are other details as well that show that Manichean dualism is the most radical, and this radicalism is more than sufficient to justify recent journalistic characterizations of George W. Bush as a Manichean president, but not as a Zoroastrian.

Today's media, however, are certainly not aware of this religious-philosophical profundity when they use the word. They mine the intellectual history of the West for easy-to-remember catchwords, and this is, in fact, where we must also seek the origin of the modern term "Manichean," as I shall now try to show.

Manicheism left deeper footprints than Zoroastrianism in the consciousness of the peoples of Europe. In antiquity, Zoroastrianism remained a religion restricted to the Iranians, and before the Arab conquest of Iran and the forceful introduction of Islam, being Zoroastrian was almost synonymous with being Iranian. An Iranian was simply born a Zoroastrian, and in historical times Zoroastrianism showed no particular interest in proselytizing. It is true that its teachings may have influenced Judaism and Christianity, but in the minds of the Hellenistic world, Zoroastrianism remained the enigmatically exotic secret teaching of the Old Enemy, Iran.

Manicheism was different. From the beginning, Mani organized his church as a grandiose mission enterprise. The clerics of the community were obligated to spend their lives traveling in order to strengthen the faithful and convert unbelievers.

Even during the life of Mani, Manicheism spread beyond the borders of the Sasanian empire and penetrated into the Roman empire. In a text written in Sogdian (an Iranian language used by the Manicheans in Central Asia), we are told that Manicheans won the favor of a certain Nafšā, sister of Queen Tādī, who may be the same as Queen Tadamōr, better known as Zenobia, of Palmyra.⁵ Although Mani himself curbed the rapid expansion

⁵ See Werner Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts* (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients; Berliner Turfantexte 11; Berlin:

of his religion in Egypt, it must have reached western North Africa in the third century, for on March 31, 297, the emperor Diocletian issued an edict at Alexandria,⁶ which he sent to Julianus, the Roman proconsul in Africa, and in which the emperor threatened the adherents of this heresy emanating from Persia with harsh punishment. By the fourth century, Manicheism was present in Italy and the Balkans.

Diocletian's persecution of the Manicheans had little effect, though, no more so than that of the Christian emperors in later times, whose bans on Manicheism contributed more to its expansion than to its extinction. We must keep in mind that there was as yet no Holy Inquisition and that the power of the state was in decline. The spokesmen of the reigning Catholic orthodoxy had to resort to written polemics and oral disputation to answer the Manichean challenge. Numerous anti-Manichean writings containing such discussions and preserving information about Manicheism have survived, some even dating from the time after Manicheism itself disappeared (in the west of the Roman empire: sixth or seventh century, in the Byzantine empire: ninth century).

The most important opponent of Manicheism is no doubt the church father Aurelius Augustinus, bishop of Hippo and the future Saint Augustine (354–430). Augustine had become a lay adherent of Manicheism in his youth and, as he tells us, remained one for nine years. During this time, he acquired intimate knowledge of Manichean teachings and practices, and it was out of disappointment with Manichean teachings that he returned to the Catholic faith at the ripe age of 32.

The Manicheans pretended they were able not only to help save souls but also to answer the questions about the nature of the world. It did not, however, escape the notice of the classically educated Augustine that the Manicheans' explanations of the puzzles of nature were completely outdated. For instance, what they had to say about the origin of lunar eclipses, solstices, or equinoxes was contradicted by astronomical calculations and so could not be correct.⁷

Augustine tells the story of his re-conversion to Catholicism as a pointed anecdote,⁸ but, in reality, it was the result of a process of turning away *from* Manichean dualism and *to* Neoplatonic monism. Neoplatonism had been

Akademie, 1981), 41–42. An audience with Queen Tadamōr may also be mentioned in a fragmentary Coptic Papyrus in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin; see Nils Arne Pedersen, "A Manichaean Historical Text," *ZPE* 119 (1997): 195–96, 199–200.

⁶ Thus William Seston, "De l'authenticité de l'édit de Dioclétien contre les Manichéens," in *Mélanges de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes offerts à Alfred Ernout* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1940), 345–54.

⁷ Augustine, *Confessiones* V, 3, CCSL 27, 58–59.

⁸ Augustine, *Confessiones* VIII, 12, CCSL 27, 130–32 (131: "tolle, lege, tolle, lege"!).

developed by Plotinus and been systematized by Porphyry in the third century as a decidedly non-Christian and anti-Gnostic philosophy, but in the Latin west of the empire it changed character, when the African rhetoric teacher Marius Victorinus, who had translated Plotinus' works into Latin, suddenly joined the Catholic church and gave Neoplatonism, as it was in vogue in Milan toward the end of the century, a Christian character. Reading this version of Plotinus' writings in Victorinus' translation was a revelation to Augustine.

Yet this could only happen at the cost of Augustine's Manichean convictions. Manicheans had produced a mostly consistent dualistic picture of the world, in which the divinity was relieved of any responsibility for the evil and suffering in the world, but for Augustine the problem had always been that this solution to the problem of evil was possible only at the cost of God's perfect omnipotence, as it put God in a passive, suffering position with respect to evil. It was, in fact, the powers of evil that had initiated the precosmic process leading to the creation of the world, a process that had begun with the painful sacrifice of the First Man and his Five Sons. The subsequent works of the powers of Light were simply preparations for battle and were aimed at recovering the Light that had been lost in the beginning and to deliver the captured Light from the domination of Darkness. But even in this the divinity was not completely successful, since the World of Light had to give up a fraction of its substance and leave it forever in the power of the forces of Darkness. This suffering passivity of the powers of good was as unsatisfactory to Augustine as the Christian assumption with which he had grown up that God as creator was somehow responsible for the evil in the world.⁹

The Neoplatonic teaching of Plotinus provided the longed-for way out of this dilemma, as it seemed to prove that the power of good was constantly active and taking initiatives, but without bearing any responsibility for evil. It also seemed to give the figure of Christ a much higher position than Manicheism did. In Plotinus' system, all phenomena emerged from a universal proto-idea by proceeding from one level to the next and multiplying. This "proto-idea," which Plotinus called *to hen* "the One," could also be called the Divinity of All. Since all phenomena on all their levels were interconnected, they had to be good, and evil was nothing but a turning away and becoming different.¹⁰ Here Augustine found a counter-model to Manichean theodicy and concluded that evil possessed no real existence of its own. Hence he was able to say: *Quid est autem aliud quod malum dicitur, nisi privatio boni?* "What, after all, is that which is called evil other than the

⁹ See, further, the Appendix.

¹⁰ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London: Faber, 1967), 83.

privation of good?”¹¹; or (*malum*) *quod nihil aliud est quam corruptio* “(evil) which is none other than corruption”¹²; and against the Manichean concept of the origin of evil Augustine could posit man’s freedom of will: *exortum fuisse hominis malum ex libero voluntatis arbitrio* “Man’s evil emerged from the free decision of (his) will.”¹³

One would be hard put to find a more determined philosophical counter-proposal to the Manichean system, even if one concedes that the Manichean concept of free will was only able to express itself clearly in its criticism of the philosophy of the Roman empire and Alexandrian theology. It is within these limits that Manichean treatises such as the *Sermon of the Light Nous*¹⁴ develop a strictly deterministic description of the process of deliverance of the Soul. In its state of what I would term “unconscious undeliveredness,” the Soul is in the power and prison of the limbs of the body, and it can only be released by the influence of the divine Light *Nous*, which awakens the Soul and unties it,¹⁵ thereby enabling it to make its natural choice to return to the realm of Light. This natural inclination on the part of the Soul toward the world of Light is understood as freedom and can therefore, without giving it any deeper meaning, be described as exercising freedom of will. We see this, for instance, in a *Sarakōtōn Psalm*:¹⁶ “The life and death of each man is in his own hands. As for us, let us live: what is all the crowd to us?” Here, life and death stand for eternal deliverance and damnation, not for the destiny of man on earth.

It is as much to the point when Augustine the philosopher reproaches the Manicheans for *dyotheismus*, that is, for having two gods. The reproach is materially justified, even though the Manicheans themselves of course did not refer to the Prince of Darkness as a second god. Augustine put it as follows to his discussion partner Faustus:

Nam cito uidetur Faustus se defendisse, cum ait: “Non dicimus duos deos, sed deum et hylen,” porro autem, cum quaesieris, quam dicat hylen, audies plane describi alterum deum.

Faustus seems glibly to defend himself by saying, “We speak not of two gods, but of God and Hyle.” But when you ask what he means by “Hyle,”

¹¹ Augustine, *Enchiridion* 11 (CCSL 46:53); trans. M. Dods “Evil,” in *The Essential Augustine*, ed. Vernon J. Bourke (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub. Co., 1974), 65.

¹² Augustine, *De natura boni* 4, CSEL 25, 857.

¹³ Augustine, *Retractationes* 1,15, CSEL 36, 82.

¹⁴ Edited by Werner Sundermann, *Der Sermon vom Licht-Nous* (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des Alten Orients; Berliner Turfantexte 17; Berlin: Akademie, 1992).

¹⁵ See Sundermann, *Der Sermon vom Licht-Nous*, 62–69.

¹⁶ Charles R. C. Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book II* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1938), 158.

you will hear (him say) that it is in fact another (second) god that is being described.¹⁷

Neither Christians nor Muslims took upon themselves to preserve the writings of the Manicheans, once Manicheism had vanished. The Christians did, however, preserve the writings of Augustine that he himself considered worth transmitting to future generations. Toward the end of his life, Augustine had an index prepared listing all of his available works that he had not rejected, which Possidius, Bishop of Calama in Numidia (fl. 437), preserved in the biography he wrote of his master.¹⁸ Thirty-three titles are listed as anti-Manichean and gathered together as Group IV of the complete works. Among these are five sermons and fifteen questions from the collection of *De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII*, but, more importantly, several large works targeting Manichean figures, including the *Contra Faustum manichaeum quaestiones diversae* in thirty-three books, which Augustine himself called a *grande opus*¹⁹ and Cornelius P. Mayer has called a summa of the anti-Manichean apology of the church father.²⁰ Other writings in this group concern various issues after which they are often named, such as the two books of *De moribus ecclesiae et de moribus Manichaeorum* “About the customs of the Church and the customs of the Manicheans,” an extremely polemical work, which, for its black-and-white painting, truly itself deserves to be called “Manichean.”

Of the remaining anti-Manichean writings from Augustine the following is well-known and has been much discussed: the *Contra Epistulam fundamenti*, “Against the Letter regarding the basis,” which contains comprehensive quotations from a work by Mani.²¹

It is not always easy to decide to which group a specific work by the Bishop of Hippo should be assigned, however, which is no doubt the reason why several anti-Manichean works are not in Group IV, among them the *De vera religione*, “On the true religion,” and the *De utilitate credendi ad Honoratum*, “On the usefulness of believing (addressed) to Honoratus,” but above all his *Confessions*.

The important thing for us is the fact that Augustine’s massive work played an important role in forming the view of Manicheism up through the

¹⁷ Augustine, *Contra Faustum* XXI, 4, CSEL 25, pt. I, 572.

¹⁸ Possidius, Bishop of Calama, *Sancti Augustini Vita Scripta a Possidio Episcopo*, ed. Herbert T. Weiskotten (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1919).

¹⁹ Augustine, *Retractationes* 1,15, CSEL 36, 139.

²⁰ Cornelius P. Mayer, “Die antimanichäischen Schriften Augustins,” *Augustinianum* 14 (1974): 298.

²¹ Ed. and trans. Erich Feldmann, *Die “Epistula Fundamenti” der nordafrikanischen Manichäer: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion* (Altenberge: CIS-Verlag, 1987), and Markus Stein, *Manichaei Epistula Fundamenti: Text, Übersetzung, Erläuterungen*, vol. 2 of *Manichaica latina* (Paderborn: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002).

ages and thus, though it has been a long time since Manicheism was a living religion, served to keep it very much alive in Western thought, as the following two anecdotes exemplify.

In the thirteenth century, the Dominican Inquisitor Peter of Verona,²² himself allegedly a Cathar by birth,²³ knew of a Cathar doctrine that evidently imitated the Manichean teaching about the seduction of the archonts and the fall of the abortions.²⁴ We may ask where the Cathars obtained this knowledge and whether Manichean sources really survived in the thirteenth century. We have no other evidence for such an assumption, and it is much easier simply to assume that not only those of the true faith but also heretics studied the works of Saint Augustine and found the myth of the seduction of the archonts there. Augustine, in fact, cited it from Mani's *Treasure of Life*.²⁵

In the sixteenth century, the extremist Lutheran theologian Matthias Flacius (Illyricus; 1520–75) created quite a stir when he taught that original sin was the “substance of man” (*peccatum originale est substantia hominis*).²⁶ Thanks to the slanderous accusations by T. Heshusius (1527–88) and others,²⁷ Flacius acquired a reputation for Manichean heresy among his opponents. This in turn led Cyriacus Spangenberg von Mansfeld (1528–1604) to write a *Historia Manichaeorum*, which appeared in 1578, in order to delimit the nature of Manicheism against that of Flacius.²⁸

In this way, Manicheism remained present in European intellectual history, and it owes its negative use in current political discourse to refer to a black-and-white way of thinking to Augustine and other Christian polemicists.

“Manichean” in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

“Manichean” was a well-known term also in the daily discourse of a century ago, not, however, in today's sense of someone who thinks in terms of irreconcilable oppositions, but as a derogatory term for creditors. The

²² Arno Borst, “Petrus Veronensis,” *RGG* 5:255; J. Baur, “Petrus Martyr,” *LTK* 8, 369–70.

²³ The son of “parents infected with Manichaeism” (web site of Mater Dei, Dallas) or, more commonly stated, Cathars, by whom he was murdered in 1252; he was subsequently canonized as a martyr.

²⁴ Milan Loos, *The Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages* (Prague: Akademia, 1974), 251.

²⁵ *De natura boni*, CSEL 25, 881–84. Trans. in Alexander Böhlig and Jes P. Asmussen, *Der Manichäismus*, 3d vol. of *Die Gnosis*, ed. Carl Andresen et al. (Die Bibliothek der Alten Welt; Zürich and Munich: Artemis & Winkler, 1980), 222–24.

²⁶ Oliver K. Olson, “Matthias Flacius Illyricus,” in *TRE* 11:208. Cf. also Hans H. Schaeder, “Der Manichäismus nach neuen Funden und Forschungen,” in *Orientalische Stimmen zum Erlösungsgedanken*, ed. Franz G. Taeschner et al. (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1936), 84.

²⁷ Olson, “Matthias Flacius Illyricus,” 209.

²⁸ Olson, “Matthias Flacius Illyricus,” 209; Schaeder, “Der Manichäismus,” 84.

1897 edition of *Meyers Konversationslexicon* has the following definition of the word: “Studentische Bezeichnung für Gläubiger (wahrscheinlich in Anspielung auf “mahnen”),” “term used by students to refer to some kind of creditor (probably connecting it with “remind” [i.e., send reminders]).”²⁹ *Heises Fremdwörterbuch* has the following definitions:³⁰

“Manichean”: Uneigentlich und scherzhaft: ungestüme Gläubiger, Mahner (weil man Juden und Manichäer in mehreren Ländern Europas im Mittelalter verwechselte oder gleichachtete), “Improperly and jokingly: ‘vehement creditors, reminders (because one confused Manicheans with Jews or regarded them as equal in several European lands in the Middle Ages)’.”

“Manicheism”: In der Studentensprache scherzhaft: die abgeschmackte Ansicht der Gläubiger, daß man seine Schulden bezahlen müsse, “Used by students jokingly to signify the distasteful notion of creditors that one must pay one’s debts.”

I have found an example of this meaning in the satirical epic *Jobsiade*, on the “life, opinions, and deeds of the seminarist Hieronymus Jobs, and how he erstwhile acquired much fame and finally died in Schildburg as a night watchman,” written in 1783 by the physician and author Carl Arnold Kortum (1745–1824), a popular work, the tenth edition of which was published in 1862.³¹ As the shabby Hieronymus Jobs presents himself to take his Candidate of Theology exam and is asked a question about Manicheism, his answer reflects the only meaning of the word he knows:

Ja, diese einfältigen Teufel
Glaubten, ich würde sie ohne Zweifel
Vor meiner Abreise bezahlen noch,
Ich habe sie aber geprellt doch.
Yes, these simple devils (i.e., the creditors)
believed that I would, doubtless,
pay them before I left.
But I tricked them good!

Obviously, he was as much in the dark about the origin of this meaning of the word as the lexicographers cited above, but the Manicheans had themselves to thank for acquiring the reputation among their opponents for being merciless profiteers. Again, it was probably Augustine who was responsible for spreading this reputation throughout the Western world, as Manichean ethics was one of the principal targets of his attack, in particu-

²⁹ *Meyers Konversationslexicon* (Leipzig and Vienna, 1897: 11:865b).

³⁰ *Heises Fremdwörterbuch* (Hannover and Leipzig, 1910, 519a).

³¹ Carl Arnold Kortum, *Die Jobsiade: Ein grotesk-komisches Heldengedicht in drei Theilen: Leben, Meinungen und Taten von Hieronymus Jobs dem Kandidaten und wie er sich weiland viel Ruhm erwarb, auch endlich als Nachtwächter zu Schildburg starb* (10th ed.; Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1862).

lar the *apanthropia*, or misanthropy, that Manicheans were frequently accused of, and rightly so. This was the command not to give alms to any needy persons other than the elect³² in their own community, but also to assign a special merit to—among all possible human trades—the money-lender! The reason for this apparent narrow-mindedness was, according to Manichean thought, to be found in the fact that everything edible, all plants, even the great earth itself, harbored particles of the Living World Soul, all of which were longing for deliverance. They could only be delivered, though, if whatever *could* be eaten *was* eaten by an elect living in a state of sanctity. By digesting the food, the elect enabled the Light to be separated from the material parts of the food and rise toward heaven. Augustine pounced upon this bizarre, materialistic soteriology and highlighted it in his work, referring mockingly to the *officium ventris electorum*, “the office of the elect’s stomachs.”³³

Augustine condemned the Manicheans’ *apanthropia* as follows in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*:³⁴

Audite iniquitatem nefariam manichaeorum publicam, quam confitentur. Expedire dicunt homini feneratorem esse, quam agricolam. Quaeris causa, et reddunt rationem. Vide si ratio illa non dementia nominanda est. Qui enim in usuram, inquit, dat pecuniam, non laedit crucem luminis (multi non intelligunt, sed exponam); qui autem, inquit, agricola est, multum laedit crucem luminis. Quaeris quam crucem luminis? Membra, inquit, illa dei quae capta sunt in illo praelio, mixta sunt uniuerso mundo, et sunt in arboribus, in herbis, in pomis, in fructibus. Dei membra uexat qui terram sulco discindit; dei membra uexat, qui herbam de terra vellit; dei membra uexat, qui pomum carpit de arbore. Haec ne faciat in agro falsa homicidia, facit in fenore uera homicidia. Panem mendicanti non porrigit. Videte si potest esse maior iniquitas ista iustitia. Panem mendicanti non porrigit; quaeris, quare? Ne uitam quae est in pane, quam dicunt membrum Dei, substantiam diuinam, mendicus ille accipiat, et liget eam in carne. Quid ergo uos? Quid? Quare manducatis? Carnem non habetis? Sed nos, inquit, quia fide manichaei illuminati sumus, orationibus et psalmis nostris, qui

³² The Manichean community was divided into elect and hearers. The elect lived in monasteries, wore white, and were financed by gifts and foundations. The hearer should give a tenth of his goods to cleanse himself of the acts of the world, which, on the other hand, allowed the Elect to concentrate on their own duties. Most often he gave bread, fruits, vegetables, clothes, and sandals. Rich hearers could help financially by buying back slaves, helping out brothers in need, building and upkeep of monasteries, and miscellaneous foundations. Almsgiving was crucial for the elect to be able to practice poverty. These activities appear to have been central to the way the Manichean community worked. The Elect’s bodies served as the place for liberating the Living Soul present in all matter. They could not themselves provide themselves with the foodstuffs, however, and needed the Hearers to do this for them. This in turn forced the Hearers to sin by harming the Living Soul in matter, but by presenting the produce to the Elect, their sins would be forgiven.

³³ See Ferdinand Chr. Baur, *Das manichäische Religionssystem nach den Quellen neu untersucht und entwickelt* (Tübingen: Osiander, 1831; repr., Hildesheim and New York: Olms, 1973), 288.

³⁴ Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: Psalmum 140, c. 12, 3–25 (CCSL 40:2034–35).

electi sumus, purgamus inde uitam quae est in illo pane, et mittimus illam ad thesauros caelorum. Tales sunt electi, ut non sint saluandi a Deo, sed saluatores Dei. Hear about the common, unjust severity of the Manicheans which they confess. They say it is more beneficial for man to be a money-lender than a peasant. You ask for the reason, and they give you a reason. Consider well whether such a reason should not be called an absurdity. For they say, he who lends money does not hurt the Cross of Light. (Many do not understand that, but I shall explain.) But, as they say, he who is a peasant hurts the Cross of Light a lot. Which Cross of Light?, you ask. Those limbs of God, they say, that had been caught in that (First) Battle and were mixed into the entire world. They are in trees, herbs, fruits, and crops. He who plows the soil with a plow hurts God's limbs. He who pulls herbs from the ground hurts God's limbs. He who tears fruit from a tree hurts God's limbs. In order not to commit these false murders in the field, he commits real murders in the money business. He offers no bread to the beggar. You ask, why? Lest the beggar take the life which is in the bread, which they call God's limb and a divine substance, and bind it in the flesh. So what are you doing? What? Why are you chewing? Are you fleshless? But we, they say, because we are illuminated by the faith of Mani, we, who are the elect, purify through our prayers and hymns the life which is in that bread and send it to the treasures of heaven. The elect are such that they are not those who should be saved by God, but these who save God.

The tenor of this accusation can be compared with a fragment of a Manichean Parthian homily, in which we read:

[He who] would take *alms-food as (much as) a big mountain and could redeem it, should eat it: he himself will be saved, he will also save him who gave him the *alms-food, and it (or: he) will reach the home of the gods unharmed. And he who would take *alms-food as much as a single *grain of mustard but could not redeem it, then...better for him...fire...³⁵

In the preceding discussion, I have used the works of Augustine as the main sources for European knowledge of Manicheism, but I do not pretend they are the only ones. Another much-read source was the *Acta Archelai*, authored by a certain Hegemonius,³⁶ which combines a good sketch

³⁵ Walter B. Henning, "A Grain of Mustard," *AION-L* (1965): 30–32.

³⁶ Several church fathers from the fourth century mention it: Cyril of Jerusalem (fl. 348), Epiphanius (b. 313), and Jerome (345–419). The *Acta Archelai* itself purported to be the acts of a discussion between Bishop Archelaus of Kaskhar (al-Wasit) or Carrhae (?) and Mani himself that took place in 277 at Kaskhar/Carrhae and Diodoris(?) in Mesopotamia, but Isaac de Beausobre (*Histoire critique de Maniché et du manichéisme* [2 vols.; Amsterdam: Bernard, 1734–39; repr., Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1970], 1:155–79), showed that the *Acta* could not possibly be original; it was probably composed, not just written down, by Hegemonius in 330 or a bit later, that is, over sixty years after the event it records. Cf. Samuel N. C. Lieu, "Fact and Fiction in the *Acta Archelai*," in *Manichaean Studies: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Manichaeism, August 5–9, 1987, Department of History of Religions, Lund University, Sweden*, ed. Peder Bryder (vol. 1 of *Lund Studies in African and Asian Religions*, ed. Tord Olsson; Lund: Lund-plus Ultra, 1988), 73. Trans. Mark Vermes, *Hegemonius: Acta*

of Mani's teaching with a distorted account of his life. I shall not discuss this work here, because, in my opinion, the thoughts about Manichean dualism and *apanthropia*, as they remained in the consciousness of Europe, were derived mostly from the work of Augustine.

*Manicheism as "The True Christianity"*³⁷

It is also Augustine who plays the principal part in the third and final part of this presentation, though not as critical transmitter and preserver of information about the Manicheans, but as its opponent. This is, in fact, what the church father is reproached for by the adherents of Rudolph Steiner's (1861–1925) anthroposophical teachings. Thus, Eugen Roll writes as follows about Augustine:

A suppressed grudge gnawed at his self-confidence like a festering wound and became the source of endless resentments. Only so one can understand his militant writings, above all the 33 books against the Manicheans.³⁸

Such a judgment, however, presupposes a positive attitude among anthroposophists to Mani and his teachings. In fact, Rudolph Steiner saw in Mani his own path-finder and predecessor.³⁹ Steiner's reverence for the physician from Babylon is clearly expressed in his own words:

Archelai (The Acts of Archelaus), intro. and comm. Samuel N. C. Lieu with Kevin Kaatz (Manichean Studies 4; Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

³⁷ I am grateful to Christa M. Siegert who kindly gave me valuable information on and access to relevant works of anthroposophical literature.

³⁸ Eugen Roll, *Mani der Gesandte des Lichts* (2d ed.; Stuttgart: Mellinger, 1989), 96: "Ein verdrängter Groll nagte wie eine schwärende Wunde an seinem Selbstgefühl und wurde zur Quelle unendlicher Ressentiments. Nur so sind seine Kampfschriften zu verstehen, allen voran die 33 Bücher gegen die Manichäer."

³⁹ According to an index of his works (Emil Mötteli, *Sachwort- und Namenregister der Inhaltsangaben*, vol. 2 of *Übersichtsbände zur Rudolf Steiner Gesamtausgabe* [Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1980]), Steiner spoke and wrote about Mani and Manicheism in *Die Tempellegende und die Goldene Legende als symbolischer Ausdruck vergangener und zukünftiger Entwicklungsgeheimnisse des Menschen*, ed. Hella Wiesberger (2d ed., Dornach: Steiner, 1982), 68–79 (lecture on Manicheism); *Die Apokalypse des Johannes* (6th ed.; Dornach: Steiner, 1979), 162–63 (the traditional understanding of Manichean dualism is wrong); *Okkultes Lesen und okkultes Hören. Wie bekommt man das Sein in die Ideenwelt hinein?* (2d enl. ed.; Dornach: Steiner, 1987), 193–95 (the mystery of Golgatha and the Manichean Jesus Christ); *Bausteine zu einer Erkenntnis des Mysteriums von Golgatha. Kosmische und menschliche Metamorphose* (2d ed.; Dornach: Steiner, 1982), 304–5 (what Augustine did not understand in Manicheism); *Die Naturwissenschaft und die weltgeschichtliche Entwicklung der Menschheit seit dem Altertum*, ed. Waldemar Schornstein and Johann Waeger (Dornach: Rudolf Steiner-Nachlassverwaltung, 1969), 32–34 (Augustine and Manicheism, the nature of Manicheism); *Der Orient im Lichte des Okzidents: Die Kinder des Luzifer und die Brüder Christi*, ed. Edwin Froböse and Caroline Wispler (Dornach: Steiner, 1982 [not in Mötteli, *Sachwort- und Namenregister*]), 191–96 (the sequence Skythianos, Gautama Buddha, Zarathustra, Manes).

Mani is that exalted individuality, who is for ever and ever embodied on earth, who is the guiding spirit of those who work for the conversion of evil. When we speak of the great leaders of mankind, we have to think of this individuality, too.⁴⁰

The concern of the anthroposophists is of course not to reestablish the Manichean community in the present day, since its understanding of the world belongs “to the spiritual life of the past.”⁴¹ “Nevertheless, it is a justified goal to seek in our own century what corresponds to the impulses of the great Mani in modern form.”⁴² This, in fact, implies a new and independent explanation of the role of Mani and his message. The risen Mani is assigned the cosmic role of seeing to the spiritual education of humanity. It was Mani who, in collaboration with Skythianos, the Buddha, and Zarathustra and commissioned by Christ, in 1459, initiated Christian Rosenkreuz, founder of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, into the mysteries of his secret society and thus appointed him as the new herald of eternal truth.⁴³

What in particular attracted the anthroposophists to the Manichean teachings was Manichean Christology in the sense that the figure of Christ was elevated beyond the historical Jesus of Nazareth into the cosmic-transcendental realm to a degree that went far beyond Paul’s Christology. In Mani’s Christology they found a redeemer god, Christ, who had already brought gnosis to Adam and later called forth the chain of prophets. As a suffering figure he also represented the World Soul imprisoned in the world. Thus, they were able to see in this figure a prototype of their own Christology, in which the birth of the redeemer is described as a cosmic event, a new act of creation.⁴⁴ Jesus’ epiphany makes some of his true, divine nature visible,⁴⁵ and his resurrection is a piece of Doomsday and something of the coming eon in our world time.⁴⁶ The most significant link

⁴⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *Die Apokalypse des Johannes* (6th ed.; Dornach: Steiner, 1979), 163: “Manes ist jene hohe Individualität, die immer und immer wieder auf der Erde verkörpert ist, die der leitende Geist ist derer, die zur Bekehrung des Bösen da sind. Wenn wir von den großen Führern der Menschen sprechen, so müssen wir auch dieser Individualität gedenken” (see also Hugo Reimann, *Manichäismus: das Christentum der Freiheit* [2d ed.; Dornach: Geering, 1980], 108). A similar but not identical formulation of Steiner’s words is found in Chr. M. Siebert, *Mani Perlenlieder* (Cadolzburg: Hermanes T. Verlag, 1985), 12.

⁴¹ Roll, *Mani der Gesandte des Lichts*, 135.

⁴² Roll, *Mani der Gesandte des Lichts*, 135.

⁴³ Rudolf Steiner, *Der Orient im Lichte des Okzidents: Die Kinder des Luzifer und die Brüder Christi* (Dornach: R. Steiner Verlag, 1982), 27–28 (ninth lecture); cf. also F. Herbert Hillring, *Das Ende unseres Jahrhunderts und die Aufgaben der Rosenkreuzer* (2d ed.; Freiburg i. Br.: Die Kommenden, 1978), 13 (I owe this reference to Mrs. Christa M. Siebert).

⁴⁴ Rudolf Frieling, *Christentum und Wiederverkörperung* (published by the Christengemeinschaft in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik; Berlin: Union, 1986), 23.

⁴⁵ Frieling, *Christentum*, 27.

⁴⁶ Frieling, *Christentum*, 33.

between Manichean and anthroposophical teachings about Christ is found in Steiner's description of Christ as an exalted sun spirit who has been accompanying humanity under various names, helping it and bestowing upon it his grace, and finally revealing himself in the human Jesus. Steiner's strange teaching about two boy Jesuses, of whom Zarathustra lived in one, who was also enlightened by the Buddha, can also be compared with the Manichean *successio apostolica*.⁴⁷

So it is not surprising that the anthroposophist Emil Bock, for instance, calls Mani's teachings "the Christianity of the Holy Spirit,"⁴⁸ that Hugo Reimann called his book *Manicheism: The Christianity of Freedom*,⁴⁹ and that Roland van Vliet called his *Manicheism as the Christianity of Freedom and Love*.⁵⁰

One could mention other points of contact as well, such as the similar (but not identical) teachings about incarnation, the anthropological speculations, the use of fine arts to serve the faith, etc. Such emphatic turns toward Manicheism can also cite the testimony of the Manichean contemporaries of Augustine. Faustus, for instance, viewed himself as the true Christian and spoke disparagingly about the Catholics as "semi-Christians."⁵¹ Even Augustine himself might be called as a witness, since in his youth he embraced Manicheism as a kind of perfect Christianity (as pointed out by Johannes van Oort).⁵²

In my opinion, however, all these claims miss a decisive fact: Manicheism is not a Christian teaching. It sprung from the Christian confession of a Mesopotamian Baptist sect, but became a religion in its own right. The pre-eminent role of the figure of Christ in Manicheism has overshadowed this fact. The Manichean Christ is both a redeeming divinity and the redeemed World Soul (hence commonly referred to as the "Redeemed Redeemer"). But he is also the historical Jesus of Nazareth and the Judge at the final judgment, and he appears as the moon in the heavens. This omnipresence of Christ, though, has also made him into a rather vague figure that can be

⁴⁷ Helmut Obst, *Apostel und Propheten der Neuzeit: Gründer christlicher Religionsgemeinschaften des 19./20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Union, 1979), 354.

⁴⁸ Roll, *Mani der Gesandte des Lichts*, 134.

⁴⁹ Reimann, *Manichäismus: das Christentum der Freiheit*.

⁵⁰ Roland van Vliet, *Het Manicheïsme als het christendom van vrijheid en liefde* (Kampen: Kok, 1999).

⁵¹ François Decret, *Aspects du manichéisme dans l'Afrique romaine: Les controverses de Fortunatus, Faustus, et Felix avec saint Augustin* (Paris: Études augustinienes, 1979), 97–98, with n. 1.

⁵² Johannes van Oort, "Augustinus und der Manichäismus," in *The Manichaeen NOUS: Proceedings of the International Symposium Organized in Louvain from 31 July to 3 August 1991*, ed. Alois van Tongerloo and Johannes Van Oort (Manichaean Studies 2; Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 294.

replaced by other divinities in all its functions. Manicheism would lose none of its uniqueness if one were to eliminate the figure of the traditional Christ, as, in fact, once happened. In the manual of his doctrine that he dedicated to his Zoroastrian king Shapur I and hence named the *Šābuhrangān*,⁵³ Mani obviously thought it opportune not to let the name of the Christian redeemer appear at all.⁵⁴

What all this in the end boils down to is the fact that Manicheism is, to us, an alien, forgotten, and misunderstood religion. What has come down to us from Manicheism are generic judgments, the reasons for which have been forgotten, or unintentional actualizations, which nowhere come close to the historical facts.

Appendix: The Manichean Myth

by Prods Oktor Skjærvø

Mani's problem was, like that of many other founders of religions, the dilemma of explaining the existence of evil given a good god. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, evil originated through sin committed by the first two humans. The efforts of later theologians went into finding an explanation for the fact that God did not prevent this from happening. One solution to the problem proposed in the various Gnostic schools current in the Middle East in the first centuries of our era was to postulate a deterioration that proceeded from the level of the state of grace, via a level containing a creator god, down to the present level. The problem involved here was to account for the start of this deterioration.

Mani, however, found a solution to the problem in a different place. In the religion of Iran, the problem of evil had been "solved" by postulating two separate principles, both existing from eternity, though not for eterni-

⁵³ Manfred Hutter, *Manis kosmogonische Šābuhrangān-Texte* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 38 (and elsewhere), and David Neil MacKenzie, "Mani's *Šābuhrangān*," *BSOAS* 42 (1979): 516 (and elsewhere).

⁵⁴ It is replaced by the term *xrdyšhr yzd* "God-wisdom-power" (thus Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Iranian Elements in Manicheism: A Comparative Contrastive Approach," in *Au carrefour des religions: Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux*, ed. Rika Gyselen (Res Orientales II; Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 1995), 281). Cf. also Werner Sundermann, "Namen von Göttern, Dämonen und Menschen in iranischen Versionen des manichäischen Mythos," *AoF* 6 (1979): 102, 132; repr. in Werner Sundermann, *Manichaica Iranica*, ed. Christiane Reck *et al.* (2 vols.; Rome: Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 2001), 1:128, 158), where I translated the term as "Gott der Weisheitswelt."

ty.⁵⁵ Evil came into the world when the forces of evil or darkness perceived the realm of goodness or light and wanted to possess and destroy it. The lord of the realm of light was aware that the power of darkness could only be overcome in battle and allowed it to break through the barrier separating the two realms, but created the visible world as battlefield. At the end of a given period the forces of evil would be overcome, and the world return to its original state.⁵⁶

When the Manichean myth starts, we are presented with the existence of two primeval principles existing from eternity but separated by a common border: Light vs. Darkness, good vs. evil, life vs. death, intelligence vs. stupidity, beauty vs. ugliness, peace, calm, and order vs. war, disturbance, and chaos, etc., opposed and contrary to one another in every way.

Originally the two were in a stage of equilibrium, with the Realm of Light in the north and the Realm of Darkness in the south. The Realm of Light was in constant expansion in three directions (north, east, and west), while the Realm of Darkness could only expand toward the south. Thus it found itself squeezed between the eastern and western expansions of the Realm of Light, like a wedge.⁵⁷

In the course of its chaotic existence the King of the Realm of Darkness and its inhabitants were brought close to the Border and saw the Realm of Light. Having become aware of the Light they wanted to possess and devour it. They readied an attack. At that moment the five greatneses, which made up the Realm of Light, trembled in concern for themselves.

In order to avoid this attack, the Father of Greatness devised a plan to get rid of the Darkness once and for all. Ruling out the possibility of using his Aeons, which were not intended for war, he decided to go himself (that is, by his Self). For this purpose he began a series of evocations or emanations. The first of these was the Mother of Life/Mother of the Living, who in turn evoked the First Man. The First Man evoked his five sons, who were also his Soul.

⁵⁵ See Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Zoroastrian Dualism," in this volume.

⁵⁶ Surveys of the Manichean myth are numerous, from Augustine and other ancient authors to contemporary literature, for instance: Augustine, *De haeresibus* 46, CCSL 46:312–20; Beausobre, *Histoire critique de Manichée et du manichéisme*; Baur, *Das manichäische Religionssystem*; Abraham V. W. Jackson, *Researches in Manichæism with Special Reference to the Turfan Fragments*, Columbia University Indo-Iranian series 13 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932); Henri-Charles Puech, *Le manichéisme: son fondateur, sa doctrine* (Paris: Civilisations du Sud, 1949); Böhlig and Asmussen, *Der Manichäismus*, 27–36; Lieu, *Manichaeism*, 8–32; Karl Matthäus Woschitz, Manfred Hutter, and Karl Prenner, *Das manichäische Urdrama des Lichts* (Vienna: Herder, 1989). Text collections are found in Alfred Adam, *Texte zum Manichäismus* (2nd rev. and enl. ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969; mostly Greek and Latin); Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Parables, Hymns and Prayers* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993; Iranian and Turkish); Böhlig and Asmussen, *Der Manichäismus*.

⁵⁷ Augustine, *Contra Faustum* IV, 2, CSEL 25, pt. I, 271.

The First Man donned his five sons as armor and was sent down to do battle with the powers of Darkness.

As he went down, an angel lit up his road, displaying the crown of victory, and when the king of darkness saw him he said to himself, "that which I sought far away, I have found close by!"

The First Man and his five sons were attacked, overcome, stunned, and rendered unconscious by the sons of Darkness. The sons of the First Man were devoured/consumed by the sons of Darkness, but would then affect them like deadly poison. The sons themselves were rendered completely distracted by the poison inherent in the sons of Darkness, like a man bitten by a mad dog or a poisonous snake.

The swallowing of the sons initiated the period of Mixture, that is of the Light in the Darkness or Matter (Gk. *Hulē*, Pers. *Āz*). This was exactly the plan, or scheme, of the Father, who was using the sons as bait for the Darkness. By offering himself and his sons to them as a bait or poison, just as a man might mix poison in a cake and give to an enemy, the darkness would ultimately be defeated.⁵⁸

This was thus the beginning of the long and painful imprisonment of Light in Matter and the reason for the subsequent cosmic development, the creation of the world and mankind and the liberation of the imprisoned Light, which was the salvation of man.

Then the rescuing action was set in motion. When the First Man came to, he called up to his Father seven times. The Father of Greatness then evoked the Friend of the Lights, who evoked the Great Builder, who evoked the Living Spirit, who evoked *his* five sons.

The Living Spirit and his sons readied themselves for the rescue, and the Living Spirit called out with a mighty voice a call, which became the prototype of the call for salvation (*Puech*). The Call cut open the darkness like a sword, revealing the shape of the First Man. The First Man answered, and his Answer together with the Call ascended to the Living Spirit, who donned the Call, and the Mother of Life, who donned the Answer, her dear son.

The two of them next descended into the Darkness. The Living Spirit extended his Right Hand to the First Man and pulled him out. This became a ritual and symbolic gesture among the Manicheans. The Mother embraced and kissed him, and all three ascended in triumph up to the Light Earth, returning the First Man to his proper Homeland.⁵⁹ The First Man is thus the

⁵⁸ Theodore Bar Konai in Jackson, *Researches*, 226.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., *Kephalaia*, chap. 9, translated by Ian Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher: The Edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 42–47.

prototype of the first martyr, and his fate the prototype of martyrdom and salvation.

The Living Spirit punished the Powers of Darkness,⁶⁰ but the sons of the First Man were henceforth imprisoned in Darkness. They became the Living Soul, that is, the Light imprisoned in Matter, *Hul*, which would need to be saved/redeemed.

Rescue of the Imprisoned Light: Creation of the Cosmos

Having rescued the First Man, a scheme had to be invented to extract the five sons of the First Man, his Soul, who, having been abandoned by their Father, were now actually in the bowels of the Darkness. The plan was to create the world to serve as an enormous mechanism of salvation, making it into a kind of enormous still or waterwheel,⁶¹ which would gradually extract all the Light from Matter and return it to and reunite it with its Origin. For this purpose the Living Spirit together with his five sons made the world from the dark matter.

According to Bar Konai,⁶² the Living Spirit ordered three of his sons to kill and flay the sons of Darkness, the archonts, and take them to the Mother of Life, who arranged to have ten or eleven heavens made out of their hides. According to other sources some of the archonts were chained to the heavens, which is why they are sometimes dark, although speckled with stars, which represent the particles of the original light that the archonts had swallowed up. This scenario also explained the evil influences of the planets.

The three sons of the Living Spirit next threw the carcasses of the archonts down onto the Dark Earth of the Realm of Darkness, making eight earths. The bones became the mountains, and the flesh and excrements became the earth.

The Living Spirit then showed his forms to the sons of Darkness, which made them emit part of the Light they had swallowed. This Light the Living Spirit distilled once and made the sun and the moon from it. In other accounts, he made the Light into three lots: that which had not suffered from the contact with the Darkness he made into the sun and the moon, that which had suffered moderately from the contact with the Darkness he made into the stars. From the rest of the Light he made the wheels of wind, water, and fire. All these objects he then fastened below, and orbits were settled for them.

⁶⁰ See, e.g., *Kephalaia*, chap. 16, trans. Gardner, *The Kephalaia*, 55–56.

⁶¹ See, e.g., Hutter, *Manis kosmogonische Šābuhrangān-Texte*, 58–60

⁶² See, e.g., Jackson, *Researches*, 233–35.

The Mother, the First Man, and the Living Spirit next went before the Father and invoked him and asked him for a Savior. The Father heard them and evoked the third Creation. The Third Messenger came to the two ships (sun and moon) and charged his servants to set them in motion. The Third Messenger took up his dwelling in the sun, while Jesus the Splendor together with the Virgin of Light resided in the moon. The three wheels of wind, water, and fire started turning like a big water wheel, detaching particles of Light from matter and conveying them up via the Column of Glory to the moon (fifteen days), where they were further refined and transferred to the sun (fifteen days), whence they were transferred to the Earth of Light. The salvaged/refined Light will in the end be gathered into the Perfect Man/Last God/Last Statue and rise up to Paradise.⁶³

The Great Builder made a New Earth and set in motion the three wheels and also built a prison for the powers of Darkness to be detained in at the end of the world.

As soon as the two ships reached the zenith, the Third Messenger revealed his male form as well as his female form to the female and male archonts, respectively, who were caught up in a burning desire for him/her. The male archonts began releasing the Light they contained through their sperm.

The Third Messenger hid his forms and filtered the Light from the sperm, which fell back down on the archonts, was rejected by them, and fell down on the earth, half of it on the wet part and half on the dry part of the earth. At that time, the transmigration of souls started.⁶⁴

Anthropology

Because of unbridled intercourse in the Realm of Darkness from eternity, the daughters of Darkness were already pregnant, and after seeing the forms of the Third Messenger they aborted their fetuses, which fell down upon the earth and started eating the shoots of the trees. The abortions remembered the form they had seen and wondered where it had gone. Matter (*Hul*) herself was worried after seeing the Third Messenger that the Light might escape her and therefore made a plan for retaining it more securely. She instructed Ashaqlun, the son of the King of Darkness, to tell the abortions to bring him their sons and daughters. So they did, and he ate the males and gave the females to his companion, Nebroel. The two then had intercourse, and Nebroel became pregnant and gave birth to a son they

⁶³ See, e.g., *Kephalaia*, chaps. 48–49, trans. Gardner, *The Kephalaia*, 127–33 (on the “conquits”), and chap. 71, trans. Gardner, *The Kephalaia*, 185.

⁶⁴ See, e.g., *Kephalaia*, chap. 34, trans. Gardner, *The Kephalaia*, 90.

called Adam. Next she bore a daughter, which she called Eve. Adam was unconscious, lying in torpor, having forgotten his own divine origin.

Since a large part of the Light was by now gathered in Adam, he became the first target of the second rescue mission. Jesus the Splendor woke Adam and made him begin moving.⁶⁵ Adam examined his Soul and recognized who he was. Jesus the Splendor showed him the fathers in the height and how his Soul was at the mercy of wild animals, mingled and imprisoned in all existence and chained to the stench of the Darkness. Next Jesus the Splendor made Adam stand up and made him taste of the Tree of Life, after which Adam completely realized his desperate and miserable condition. Adam was thus not only the first human, but also the first human to be apprised of his true condition: he received Knowledge of the truth, Gnosis.

This first time it was Jesus the Splendor who imparted the knowledge. Later the agent in charge of this function was a divinity called the Great Nous (redeeming cosmic intelligence), a hypostasis of Jesus the Splendor.

The human body (the microcosm) was in the image of the world (the macrocosm).⁶⁶ It was ultimately made of all the evil substance of the Realm of Darkness. To make it “function,” a “mentality” was made for it containing all thinkable evil emotions. Augustine referred to this mental part of the human body as *soul*, as well, and polemicized against the Manicheans for their “two souls.”⁶⁷

Eschatology

We must distinguish between the individual eschatology—what happens when a person dies—and the cosmic eschatology—what happens at the end of the world.⁶⁸

We have several descriptions of what happens when a man dies. Depending on which social level the person belongs to, he or she (that is, his or her Soul) will be taken out of this world or be reborn to keep improving enough

⁶⁵ Jesus does not come for the salvation of mankind alone, but for a greater cosmic purpose; see *Kephalaia*, chap. 112, trans. Gardner, *The Kephalaia*, 27.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., *Kephalaia*, chap. 70, trans. Gardner, *The Kephalaia*, 179–84).

⁶⁷ See, for instance, Augustine, *De duabus animabus*, CSEL 25, 51, 71–79.

⁶⁸ Cf. Karl W. Woschitz, in Woschitz, Hutter, and Karl, *Das manichäische Urdrama*, 130–34; complete references in Werner Sundermann, “Die Jungfrau der guten Taten,” in *Recurrent Patterns in Iranian Religions: From Mazdaism to Sufism: Proceedings of the Round Table Held in Bamberg (30th September – 4th October 1991)*, ed. Philippe Gignoux (*Studia Iranica*, cahier 2; Paris: Association pour l’avancement des études iraniennes, 1992), 159–74. See also Christiane Reck, “Die Beschreibung der Daʿn in einem soghdischen manichäischen Text,” in *Religious Themes and Texts of Pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia. Studies in Honour of Professor Gherardo Gnoli on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday on 6 December 2002*, ed. Carlo G. Cereti, Mauro Maggi, and Elio Provasi (*Beiträge zur Iranistik* 24, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2003), 323–38; Skjærvø, “Iranian elements in Manicheism,” 275–80.

to release it. When an elect dies, First Man sends a deity who brings him or her the regalia of the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Light, and a virgin looking like the dead person leads him or her up the Column of Light to the New Paradise. According to several sources, the souls who are not saved the first time around must go back into material life until they are finally salvageable.⁶⁹ Thus, according to the *Acta Archelai*,⁷⁰ the soul must go through five different bodies before it is completely cleansed.

The appearance of Mani and the propagation of his teaching mark the final stage in the battle against evil. After a period of persecution, Manicheism will become prominent under the rule of a great king, and many souls will be saved. When everybody has received and accepted this teaching, the Great War will begin, initiating the Last Days, during which the Antichrist and false prophets will appear.

At the end of the war, the church and the faith will have won, Jesus the Splendor will appear, and the last Judgment will begin, presided over by Jesus, the Judge, when the sinners will be separated from the just.⁷¹

The First Man will then reveal himself and call his sons back up to him. The five sons of the Living Spirit will abandon their thrones in the five spheres. All the warring gods will leave this world and ascend into the New Paradise (which the Great Builder had prepared for this occasion already in the beginning), where they will rest for a while, before they return to the Light Paradise and the Father of Greatness. The earth will collapse, and a great fire will burn for 1,468 years, purifying the rest of the salvageable Light. This Light will assemble into the Perfect Man/Last God/Last Statue and rise up to Paradise.

The Darkness/Matter and its Desire together with the demons—the sexes having been segregated—as well as the damned souls(!) will be imprisoned in the Ball and hurled into a ditch, which is covered by an enormous stone.

The Father will reveal his face to the other light beings, who will enter into him (or into his treasure houses) and reappear in the original paradise or the new paradise, presided over by the First Man.

Thus the primordial equilibrium has been restored, but things have changed in the universe. The Darkness will no longer be able to threaten the Realm of Light, which henceforth will maintain eternally its peace and serenity. To obtain this result, however, the Light was forced to sacrifice a part of itself, namely that which had become so inextricably infiltrated in

⁶⁹ See, e.g., Augustine, *De haeresibus* 46, 12, CCSL 46:316–17.

⁷⁰ *Acta Archelai* 10, trans. Vermes, *Hegemonius: Acta Archelai*, 52–55.

⁷¹ The account of it in the *Šābuhragān* closely follows that of Matt 25:31–46 (MacKenzie, “Mani’s *Šābuhragān*,” 507–9). Here, at an early stage of Mani’s career, there is no attempt to Iranize the concepts.

the Darkness and had become so sinful that it could no longer be saved.⁷²
This, however, does not worry the gods!

⁷² Cf. *Kephalaia*, chap. 40, trans. Gardner, *The Kephalaia*, 108–9. Augustine polemizes vehemently against the Manicheans on this point, e.g., *De duabus animabus*, CSEL 25, 73–79; *Secundini Manichaei ad Augustinum epistula*, CSEL 25, 894–95; (see other references in Asmussen, *Jes P. X^u āstvānīft*, 16).

John C. Reeves

Manichaeans as *Ahl al-Kitāb* A Study in Manichaean Scripturalism

...this revelation of mine of (the) Two Principles and of (the) living books and wisdom and knowledge is greater than (that of) the religions of the ancients.¹

This triumphalist proclamation belongs to Mani, a third-century self-styled “apostle of the God of truth to Babylonia”² and the founder of what can arguably be termed the first “world religion.” In this Middle Persian citation we discern a coupling of the two features of his religion that Mani’s opponents most frequently condemn and remark: its stridently dualistic interpretation of existence, and its obsession with books that it accords the status of revelatory scripture. Manichaeism, as Henri-Charles Puech has aptly characterized it, was indubitably “une religion du Livre.”³ Much of its distinctive doctrine, including its dualistic components, has its point of origin not in Iranian religion, but in Mani’s subversive reading of Jewish and Christian scriptures and parascriptural compositions as disseminated and filtered through the lens of a morass of dualist sectarian groups dwelling at the margins (both cultural and geographical) of the Syro-Mesopotamian world, a collection of religious fanatics and social misfits

¹ M 5794 I verso lines 10–14: *tswm kw 'yn 'bhwmyšn 'yg dw bwn 'wd nbyg'n zyndg'n whyh 'wd d'nyšn 'y mn 'c h'n 'y pyšyng'n dyn fr'ydr 'wd why hynd*; text cited from Mary Boyce, *A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 30. See also Friedrich C. Andreas and Walter B. Henning, “Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan, II,” *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1933): 296; reprinted in *W. B. Henning: Selected Papers* (2 vols.; Acta Iranica 14–15; Leiden: Brill, 1977), 1:193.

² Bīrūnī, *Athār al-bāqīya 'an-il-qurūn al-khāliya* (*Chronologie orientalischer Völker von Albērūnī*, ed. C. Eduard Sachau [Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1878; repr., Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1923]), 207.13; S. Hasan Taqīzādeh and A. A. Šīrāzī, *Mānī wa dīn-e-ū* (Teheran: Ānjamān-e Irānshīnāsī, 1335 A.H./1956), 204.

³ Henri-Charles Puech, *Le manichéisme: Son fondateur—sa doctrine* (Paris: Civilisations du Sud, 1949), 66. See also Geo Widengren, *Mani and Manichaeism* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 74. As Widengren notes, the earliest literary portrait we possess of Mani, found in the mid-fourth century *Acta Archelai* (14.3), depicts Mani in colorful Persian garb bearing a staff in his right hand and carrying a “Babylonian book” (*Babylonium...librum*) under his left arm. Similarly the first state-sponsored suppression of Manichaeism as enunciated in the edict of Diocletian of 297 C.E. emphasizes that the “abominable scriptures” (*abominandis scripturis*) of the Manichaeans must be burned. Citations from the *Acta Archelai* are taken from Hegemonius, *Acta Archelai*, ed. Charles Henry Beeson (GCS 16; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1906). The edict of Diocletian is conveniently accessible in *Texte zum Manichäismus*, ed. Alfred Adam (2d ed.; Berlin: W. de Gruyter & Co., 1969), 82–83.

whom Ibn al-Nadīm, an industrious tenth-century Muslim encyclopedist living in Baghdad, felicitously termed “sects of the Chaldean dualists,” a rubric under which that same scholar also mapped Manichaeism.⁴ In addition to his expropriation of portions of the scriptural resources of the “ancestral religions,” Mani himself reputedly authored seven books to serve as a scriptural canon for his religion, and his community subsequently placed great importance on their accurate preservation and reproduction.⁵ The crucial role his writings played in the rapid promulgation of his dualist message is underscored by the numerous references we find to them in both Manichaean and anti-Manichaean tractates, whether in the context of proselytization, denunciation, or of state-sanctioned persecutions.

Scriptures and Scripturalism in the Near East of Late Antiquity

Near Eastern “scripturalism” denotes the result of a cultural process whereby divine discourse, purportedly the very word of God, achieves inlibration; a message deemed revelatory is instantiated or registered in written form. As I have sought to show elsewhere, this regional nuancing of what constitutes an authoritative “scripture” is intimately bound with the conceptual evolution of the role of the “prophet” among the various religious communities of the Near East during late antiquity and the early medieval era.⁶ Attaining social legitimacy as an authentic prophet or messenger of God in the late antique Near East demanded the authenticating credential of a physical book or piece of writing, preferably one the candidate for such status had retrieved from heaven. “We will not believe you,” object Muhammad’s skeptical Meccan hecklers, “until you send down to us a book we can read” (Q 17:90–93). The Qur’ān itself frequently concurs that in the past whenever God dispatched prophets or messengers to instruct or to warn humanity, he sent down “scripture” (*kitāb*) with them (Q 2:213; 3:81; 35:25; 40:70; 57:25). This intimate intertwining of prophetic and scriptural authorities is not however limited to the conceptual sphere of Islam. Their nexus is deeply rooted in the rich soil of earlier ideological systems, particularly those of Judaism and Syro-Mesopotamian gnosis,⁷

⁴ *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, ed. and trans. Bayard Dodge (2 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 2:745. Ibn al-Nadīm provides important details about many of these sects (2:773–825).

⁵ See John C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions* (Monographs of the Hebrew Union College 14; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992), 9–49, especially 9–19.

⁶ In an essay entitled “Chaldean Dualist Gnosis and Islamicate Judaism,” chap. 3 of my monograph in progress, *Shades of Light and Darkness: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and the Islamicate World*.

⁷ John C. Reeves, *Heralds of That Good Realm: Syro-Mesopotamian Gnosis and Jewish Traditions* (NHMS 41; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 15–17.

and it possesses a number of significant parallels within the literatures of several schismatic religious movements arising amidst both Jews and Muslims in Mesopotamia and Persia.⁸

The notion of scripture in the sense of a tangible record of divine disclosure and instruction very early approaches an iconic, almost totemic, status. One ideological aspect of the physical realization of scripture manifests itself in an interreligious flourishing of what we might term “alphabet mysticism.” Displaying, arranging, and manipulating the graphic shapes of the characters of the sacred alphabet, or in some cases articulating the sounds which they represent, produces concrete effects in both the physical and spiritual dimensions of the universe. It is as if the alphabetic graphemes signal the elemental structures and combinations that constitute the various levels of the universe. The cross-cultural migration of this phenomenon is well illustrated in the popular episode of the “wise child-prophet” who embarrasses his primary school teacher with his superior knowledge of the esoteric mysteries encoded in the letters of the Semitic alphabet: we find this tale reproduced in a number of eastern scriptures of varying provenance.⁹ According to Shahrastānī, the twelfth-century cataloger of world religions, the quasi-Gnostic adherents of Mazdak, a sixth-century Persian sectarian whom Ibn al-Nadīm situates among the Chaldean dualists, revere a deity enthroned in the supernal world who rules the universe by manipulating the letters that spell out “the most powerful Name”; human meditation on these same letters produces a revelation of “the most awesome secret(s).”¹⁰ The radical Shiite sect of the Mughīriyya held that God existed in an anthropoid shape whose limbs and members corresponded to the number and shape of the letters of the alphabet.¹¹ Works like *Sefer Yetzira*, *Otiyyot de R. Aqiva*, and the *Shi‘ur Qomah* illustrate the currency of similar ideas among Jewish esotericist circles in the East during this time.

⁸ An excellent discussion of Near Eastern scripturalism in its medieval Jewish and Muslim manifestations is Haggai Ben-Shammai, “Return to the Scriptures in Ancient and Medieval Jewish Sectarianism and in Early Islam,” in *Les retours aux Écritures: Fondamentalismes présents et passés*, ed. Évelyne Patlagean and Alain Le Boulluec (Bibliothèque de l’École des Hautes Études, Section des Sciences Religieuses 99; Louvain/Paris: Peeters, 1993), 319–39.

⁹ In this episode, the child is usually instructed by his schoolteacher to repeat the first letter of the alphabet on command, but the child refuses to obey unless the teacher can expound that letter’s esoteric significance. When the latter confesses his inability to comply, the child proceeds to recite the entire alphabet and to discourse on the meaning of each character. For the distribution and cultural significance of this tale, see especially Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew: The Problem of Symbiosis Under Early Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 167–71.

¹⁰ Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-milal wa’l-nihāl*, ed. Muhammad b. Fath Allāh Badrān (2 vols.; [Cairo]: Matba‘at al-Azhar, [1951–55]), 1:636.4–7.

¹¹ Wilferd Madelung, “Mughīriyya,” *ET* 7:347–48.

A further aspect of scriptural totemism is that scripture and community come to be viewed as coextensive, as concrete embodiments or objectifications of each other. An attack on the integrity of the one can be read as an assault on the existence of the other. The physical manipulation, display, or even mutilation of the sacred book can rouse religious communities to a fever pitch of martial fervor or murderous rage. Martin Goodman and more recently Seth Schwartz have called attention to what the latter aptly terms a “fetishization of the Torah scroll,” an attitude already found within certain literary works of Hellenistic and Roman-era Judaism such as 1 Maccabees, the *Epistle of Aristaeas*, and the histories of Josephus.¹² The willful confiscation and destruction of Torah scrolls, as was allegedly carried out by the agents of Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc 1:56–57), signals more than a spree of thuggish vandalism; it represents the calculated annihilation of a distinctive Jewish identity within the cosmopolitan ethos of the Seleucid state. A clever, even diabolical plan, but hardly a novel one. Nebuchadnezzar had attempted to perform a similar purgation when he sacked Jerusalem—so claims Ya‘qūbī within the “biblical history” portion of his ninth-century *Ta’rikh* (“Chronicle”)—but the Babylonian monarch’s plan of virtual genocide was thwarted by Zerubbabel who

recovered the Torah and the books of the Prophets from the pit wherein Bukht-Naṣṣar (i.e., Nebuchadnezzar) had buried them. He discovered that they had not burned at all.¹³ Hence he restored (and) transcribed (copies of) the Torah, the books of the Prophets, their customary practices (*sunna*), and their religious laws (*ṣarī’a*). He was the first to record these scriptures.¹⁴

Ya‘qūbī thus affirms that Zerubbabel’s successful recovery of the Jewish scriptures permitted not only the reclamation of his people’s literary heritage but also the successful reconstitution of every aspect of Jewish communal life, including its very status as a distinct people. The notions of scripture and *ethnos* are thus intertwined, and even the titles or designations for national scriptures can function as metonyms or can be employed interchangeably, even disparagingly, by one textual community when

¹² Martin D. Goodman, “Texts, Scribes and Power in Roman Palestine,” in *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 100–2; Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B. C. E. to 640 C. E.* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 59–61, cf. 231–33.

¹³ In his earlier account of the Babylonian sack of Jerusalem, Ya‘qūbī had described how the impious Nebuchadnezzar had taken the Jewish scriptures, dumped them in a hole, tossed flaming torches on top of them, and filled the pit with dirt.

¹⁴ Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rikh* (2 vols.; Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1960), 1:66.4–6; cf. *Ibn Wadīh qui dicitur al-Ja‘qubī historiae*, ed. Martijn Th. Houtsma (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1883), 1:71.12–15; Rifaat Y. Ebied and L. R. Wickham, “Al-Ya‘qūbī’s Account of the Israelite Prophets and Kings,” *JNES* 29 (1970): 97; Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Haṣm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 226–27.

referring to another rival group: witness the qur'ānic manipulation of the appellatives *Tawrāt* (or “the Law”) for Jews and *Injīl* (or “the Gospel”) for Christians, or the demeaning Christian invocation of “that vomit of Satan...the Avesta” for Zoroastrians.¹⁵

Accordingly religious innovation or dissent can be legitimated only through scriptural means. ‘Anan b. David, often but erroneously branded as the founder of the Karaite or “scripturalist” movement within medieval Judaism,¹⁶ reportedly based his teachings on what were supposedly superior “manuscripts of the Mishnah (sic!) written in the handwriting copied from the prophet Moses,” copies of which ‘Anan allegedly brought with him to Baghdad “from the East.””¹⁷ ‘Anan also generated additional writings under his own name explicating his new insights; these works were predictably and pejoratively dismissed by one of his opponents as “a wicked and perverse Talmud.”¹⁸ Certain later Karaite authors (Ya‘qūb al-Qirqisānī, Sahl b. Maṣliḥ) ground the validity of their schism in an appeal to the authority of more ancient “Zadokite” writings, some of which may have resurfaced among their community.¹⁹ Another eighth-century Jewish dissident, the messianic pretender Abū ‘Isā al-Ḥṣṣahānī, reportedly authored a divinely inspired book in which he critiqued and reinterpreted the Jewish Bible,²⁰ but he also supposedly exhorted his followers to study the Gospels, the Qur’ān, and their commentaries, thereby endorsing a kind of scriptural

¹⁵ Ḥṣṣahānī of Marw *apud* Matt 2:2, cited from *The Commentaries of Isho‘dad of Merv, Bishop of Hadatha (c. 850 A.D.) in Syriac and English*, ed. Margaret Dunlop Gibson (2 vols.; *Horae Semiticae* 5–6; Cambridge: University Press, 1911), 2:32.11–12.

¹⁶ For some excellently nuanced discussions of this issue, see Haggai Ben-Shammai, “Between Ananites and Karaites: Observations on Early Medieval Jewish Sectarianism,” in *Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations: Volume I*, ed. Ronald L. Nettler (Oxford: Oxford Center for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 1993), 19–29; Yoram Erder, “The Karaites’ Sadducee Dilemma,” *IOS* 14 (1994): 195–226.

¹⁷ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, as published in Antoine I. Silvestre de Sacy, *Chrestomathie arabe* (3 vols.; Paris: Imprimerie imperiale, 1806), 1:161.6–8. See also Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (18 vols.; 2d ed.; New York and Philadelphia: Columbia University Press and the Jewish Publication Society, 1952–83), 5:183; Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Species of Misbelief: A History of Muslim Heresiography of the Jews* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1985), 436. This curious claim is now clarified by the near contemporary oriental traditions of Eldad ha-Dani about the legendary existence of a Levitical tribe known as the *beney Mosheh* or “children of Moses” who dwelt in the East and who moreover were supposedly in possession of Hebrew language editions of talmudic literature emanating directly from Moses.

¹⁸ So Natronai b. Hilai, the ninth-century Gaon of Sura; text available in André Paul, *Écrits de Qumran et sects juives aux premiers siècles de l’Islam: Recherches sur l’origine du Qaraïsme* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1969), 146 n. 26.

¹⁹ See Baron, *History*, 5:187–88; John C. Reeves, “Exploring the Afterlife of Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Medieval Near Eastern Religious Traditions: Some Initial Soundings,” *JSJ* 30 (1999): 148–77, especially 159–64; Fred Astren, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and Medieval Jewish Studies: Methods and Problems,” *DSD* 8 (2001): 105–23.

²⁰ So Qirqisānī and Shahrastānī; see Baron, *History*, 5:185.

eclecticism that is intriguingly reminiscent of the Manichaean tactic of the adoption and cooptation of the scriptures of the “ancestral religions.”²¹

More common, however, than this scriptural irenism is scriptural polemicism, where texts are wielded like weapons and where one scripture is directly opposed, blunted, and undermined by another.²² Qur’ān, for example, trumps *Tawrāt* and *Injīl*, even though all three scriptures share the status of divine revelation (Q 5:44–48). One might, like the former caliphal bureaucrat John of Damascus, contrast the sober testimony of the “Old and New Testaments and the words of the holy and elect Fathers’ with ‘the foul, loathsome and unclean writings of the accursed Manichaeans, Gnostics, and the rest of the heretics.’”²³ Or, in those cases where particular scriptures are shared by the competing communities, one might wage battle at the hermeneutical level and strive to demonstrate that widely accepted and sanctioned interpretations of prominent verses or stories are in fact wrong and should be amended or replaced. The Chaldean dualists, many of whom exhibited various degrees of Christianization and hence nominally respectful attitudes toward most biblically allied scriptures, were especially adept at this type of warfare. Theodore Abū Qurra, the eighth-century Melkite bishop of Ḥarrān, speaks of arguing with

people of the Manichaeans. These are they who are called the Zanādiqa, and they said: Thou must attach thyself to the (true) Christians and give heed to the word of their gospel. For the true Gospel is in our possession, which the twelve apostles have written, and there is no religion other than that which we possess, and there are no Christians apart from us. No one understands the interpretation of the Gospel save Mani, our Lord.²⁴

²¹ Abū ‘Īsā al-Īṣfahānī allegedly accepted a restrictive prophetic status for both Jesus and Muhammad. Note also the similar ecumenical attitude displayed by the early Ismā‘īliyya movement (see Wilferd Madelung, “Ismā‘īliyya,” *EF* 4:198–206) and the infamous *Rasā’il* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’; i.e., the “Brethren of Purity”: “The prophets are to be valued highly, because of their obedience to the angels in writing down in the revealed books the inspiration and announcements they received...the Torah, the Gospel, the Koran, and the ṣuḥuf of the prophets.” Quotation taken from Fred Leemhuis, “The Arabic Version of the Apocalypse of Baruch: A Christian Text?,” *JSP* 4 (1989): 23.

²² Wasserstrom also reviews aspects of this phenomenon in a discussion of what he terms “comparative exegesis”; see his *Between Muslim and Jew*, 145–53.

²³ John of Damascus, *Orationes tres* 2.10, cited from Averil Cameron, “Texts as Weapons: Polemic in the Byzantine Dark Ages,” in Bowman and Woolf, *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, 214.

²⁴ Cited by Henri-Charles Puech, “Gnostic Gospels and Related Documents,” in Edgar Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (2 vols.; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963–65), 1:268. Similarly the tenth-century Muslim jurist ‘Abd al-Jabbār states: “Mani claims that he knows the truth concerning Christ, that he is one of the latter’s followers, that nobody with the exception of himself and his (i.e., Mani’s) followers observes Christ’s law and precepts and that the Gospel which Mani has with him is the Gospel of Christ” (*Tathbūt dālā’il al-*

Finally one might, like Ḥiwī al-Balkhī, the so-called Jewish Marcion,²⁵ engage in a systematically destructive exposure of the discrepancies, contradictions, and absurdities to be found in canonical scriptures in order to ridicule their allegedly divine origin. Ḥiwī himself attacked the Hebrew Bible with devastating effect, forcing a half dozen or so later generations of Jewish exegetes to respond to and counter his critique. So-called Muslim “free-thinkers” like Ibn al-Rāwandī and al-Rāzī, both of whom exhibit tantalizing links with dualist thinkers and writings, similarly disparage the Qur’ān and even the very possibility of a prophetically countenanced religion.²⁶ According to the Karaite scholar Ya’qūb al-Qirqisānī, “dissenters and deviants like the Manichaeans” were particularly active in exploiting the ambiguities and apparent contradictions to be found in the biblical book of Genesis.²⁷ In fact Manichaeans and their Chaldean dualist brethren were infamous for their uncompromising rejection of the canonical form of the Hebrew Bible. Barely a century after the death of Mani, Ephrem Syrus reports that “they (the Manichaeans) revile our Old Testament just as the Jews revile the New Testament.”²⁸ While largely unremarkable at first glance, this statement merits a closer scrutiny. It does not say that Mani or his religion rejected the importance of the *dramatis personae* and narrated events that figure in certain portions of Judaeo-Christian scripture; such a reading is clearly false in light of the crucial significance Manichaeism manifestly accords to the words and deeds of the pre-Abrahamic biblical forefathers²⁹ and Qirqisānī’s aforementioned

nubūwwah, ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm ‘Uthmān [2 vols.; Beirut: Dār al-Arabiyyah, 1966–67], 1:114). Translation is that of Shlomo Pines, “Two Passages Concerning Mani,” *The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries of Christianity According to a New Source* (Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 2.13; Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1966), 66.

²⁵ So M. Stein, “Hiwi al-Balkhi, the Jewish Marcion,” in *Sefer Qlozner* (= *Klausner Volume*), ed. Naftali H. Tur-Sinai (Tel Aviv: Va’ad ha-Yovel, 1937), 210–55 (Hebrew).

²⁶ For the most recent discussion of these figures, see Sarah Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam: Ibn al-Rāwandī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, and Their Impact on Islamic Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

²⁷ Abū Yūsuf Ya’qūb al-Qirqisānī, *Tafsīr Bereshit* (sic), British Library Ms. Or. 2557, as published in Hartwig Hirschfeld, *Qirqisāni Studies* (Jews’ College Publication 6; London: Oxford University Press, 1918), 39.11–12. It is now recognized that the text published by Hirschfeld is actually Qirqisānī’s introduction to his much lengthier commentary on the narrative sections of the Pentateuch. His briefer commentary (called by Chiesa an “epitome”) on Genesis (*Tafsīr Bereshit*) is extant as British Library Ms. Or. 2492, which remains unpublished. See Bruno Chiesa, “A New Fragment of al-Qirqisānī’s *Kitāb al-Riyāḍ*,” *JQR* 78 (1987–88): 175–85.

²⁸ Translated from S. Ephraim’s *Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion, and Bardaisan*, ed. Charles W. Mitchell (2 vols.; London: Williams and Norgate, 1912–21), 1:43.40–44.

²⁹ See Reeves, *Heralds*, 7–17. It is barely possible that Abraham may have been viewed by Mani as a legitimate Apostle of Light to the Jews, a “national” prophet holding a rank and prestige similar to that enjoyed by the Buddha, Zoroaster, and Jesus. See Augustine, *contra Faustum* 19.3;

remark attesting a Manichaean infatuation with the biblical book of Genesis. Rather, the operative word in Ephrem's report is the pronoun "our" (*dīlan*); namely, it is *our* version of the Old Testament that effects revulsion among the Manichaeans. Manichaeism denigrates only those redactions of the Jewish scriptures that were read as such among the contemporary Jewish and Christian communities.

Competing versions of what we today refer to as Bible were rife during the initial centuries of the Common Era. Thanks to the important manuscript discoveries of the past century and the close study of these finds in tandem with a reassessment of the structure and contents of various allied literatures like Jewish apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, rabbinic midrashim, Christian parascriptural sources (e.g., the *Cave of Treasures* cycle), Qur'ān, and Muslim prophetic lore (the so-called "lives of the prophets"), a new paradigm for understanding and explaining the development of Bible and canon is beginning to emerge,³⁰ and it possesses far-reaching implications for the scholarly evaluation of the use of "biblical" characters, episodes, and motifs in a variety of Near Eastern literary contexts. Succinctly stated, this new way of reading suggests that in the absence of firm evidence to the contrary no one form of a "biblical" narrative need necessarily enjoy temporal priority or social authority over another one. Moreover, even in those diminishing cases where one can establish such priority or authority, there are sometimes embedded frozen remnants of more primitive formulations or motifs within the later text.³¹

A Manichaean Counter-Version of Genesis 1–6?

The biblical book of Genesis as known to us in its Jewish and Christian canonical recensions and as refracted to us in a bewildering variety of alternative formulations and arrangements provides an excellent focus for illustrating this approach. Works like the Masoretic recension of Genesis, *Jubilees*, the Qumran Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen), Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitates*, and the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Adam* provide different portrayals, recountals, and even stages of redaction of a limited roster of basic characters and narrative events like the creation, the first human couple, their immediate descendants, the corruption of humanity, and the universal Flood. Isolated blocks or parallel fragments of narrative

Shahrestānī, *Kitāb milāl wa'l-nihāl*, ed. Muhammad Sayyid Kīlānī (2 vols.; Cairo, 1961; repr., Beirut: Dār al-Marefah, n.d.), 1:248; also Taqīzādeh-Šīrāzī, *Mānī va dīn-e-ū*, 244.

³⁰ See James E. Bowley and John C. Reeves, "Rethinking the Concept of 'Bible': Some Theses and Proposals," *Henoch* 25 (2003): 3–18.

³¹ For some illustrations, see John C. Reeves, "Some Explorations of the Intertwining of Bible and Qur'ān," in *Bible and Qur'ān: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality*, ed. John C. Reeves (SBLSymS 24; Leiden/Atlanta: Brill/Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 43–60.

materials related to the opening scenes in Genesis can be found in portions of the Enochic literature (e.g., the *Book of Watchers*; the *Animal Apocalypse*; the Qumran *Book of Giants*) or early Jewish compositions like 4 Ezra (3:4–11; 6:38–53) and the Wisdom of Solomon (4:10–15; 10:1–4). Absorption with these primal traditions was however not confined to Jewish circles: Christianity and Islam, insofar as they consciously viewed themselves as heirs to a living scriptural tradition, also fostered creative readings and verbal construals of the primary narrative cycles attested in the early chapters of the canonical form of the book of Genesis, and their rich collections of exegetical and legendary lore occasionally attest the presence of far older constellations of motifs and narrative trajectories.³² Gnostic literatures—whether Jewish, Christian, pagan, or Muslim—abundantly bear witness to a fascination with the textual dimensions of cosmogony and theodicy in their “biblical” format,³³ and the published writings associated with the Mesopotamian Gnostic sect known as the Mandaean display a prominent interest in Genesis figures and themes.³⁴

Manichaeism unsurprisingly shares this interest, although its version of the Genesis materials presents a drastic polemical recasting of the major characters, themes, and stories related in canonical forms of the Jewish text. Even so, the Manichaean version of Genesis cannot be summarily dismissed as a patently derivative distortion of orthodox scriptures; it in fact exhibits several intriguing features suggestive of its close kinship to certain older complexes of allied traditions that once circulated as integral parts of an earlier stage of the biblical narrative tradition, but that were subsequently expunged from their original settings by the final redactors of Genesis and are now situated beyond the boundaries of the canonical forms of Genesis in parascriptural texts like *Jubilees* and portions of *1 Enoch*. One might in fact state it this way: Manichaeism subverts the canonical narrative setting,

³² The Syriac *Cave of Treasures*, for example, demonstrates how one Christian community could manipulate the discourse of Genesis to express distinctly parochial concerns (e.g., a positive evaluation of celibacy), while Muslim collections of so-called *Isrāʾīliyyāt* (Jewish stories) exploit the hortatory value of the deeds and sayings of earlier prophets like Adam, Noah, or Abraham.

³³ In addition to the aforementioned *Apocalypse of Adam*, note also the *Apocryphon of John*, the *Hypostasis of the Archons*, *On the Origin of the World*, and the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, as well as several pseudepigrapha ascribed to prominent Genesis characters like Seth or Melchizedek. Essential guidance concerning the “biblical” roots of these gnostic texts is provided by Birger A. Pearson, “Jewish Sources in Gnostic Literature,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. Michael E. Stone (CRINT 2.2; Assen/Philadelphia: Van Gorcum/Fortress, 1984), 443–81; idem, “The Problem of ‘Jewish Gnostic’ Literature,” in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, & Early Christianity*, ed. Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, Jr. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986), 15–35; and especially Gedaliahu A. G. Stroumsa, *Another Seed: Studies in Gnostic Mythology* (NHS 24; Leiden: Brill, 1984).

³⁴ See especially Eric Segelberg, “Old and New Testament Figures in Mandaean Version,” in *Syncretism*, ed. Sven S. Hartman (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1969), 228–39.

characters, and plot of the early chapters of Genesis by restoring certain motifs and themes it gleaned from more primitive forms of the same text. The purpose of this textual subversion is apparently to demonstrate that the distinctive message of Mani was originally encoded within what was perceived to be a more authentic form of this “ancestral scripture.”

In order to appreciate the astonishing nature of this claim, it must be recalled that a principal critique Mani levels against some of his prophetic predecessors is that they failed to insure the accurate registration and preservation of their writings and that consequently these writings—which eventually evolve into the canonical scriptures associated with religions like Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity—were corrupted and falsified by later generations of disciples and followers.³⁵ Ibn al-Nadīm mentions that “Mānī disparaged the other prophets in his writings. He found fault with them and charged them with lies, and maintained that devils had taken possession of them and had spoken using their tongues.”³⁶ This mode of argument is hardly new: Christian polemicists since the time of Justin Martyr had been charging Jews with the tendentious alteration of those portions of Jewish scripture that purportedly predicted the advent of Jesus and the Church, and the same accusation would enjoy renewed currency in Islam under the label of *tahrīf* (“alteration, forgery”), particularly with regard to the falsification of both the Jewish and Christian scriptures (cf. Q 3:78; 4:46; 5:15).³⁷ Certain trajectories within early Syrian Christianity, such as those represented by the pseudo-Clementine corpus of writings and the *Didaskalia*, visualized a distinction in the contents of the Jewish scriptures between those passages that were authentically revelatory and received by Moses directly from God and other passages, the so-called “false pericopes” emanating from corrupt writings prepared by later generations of scribes.³⁸ It is surely not coincidental that it is out of such a sectarian milieu

³⁵ See the sources cited by Carl Schmidt and Hans J. Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten: Originalschriften des Mani und seiner Schüler* (Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1933), 40–44; Andreas and Henning, “Mitteliranische Manichaica II,” 295 n. 1; Walter B. Henning, “The Murder of the Magi,” *JRAS* (1944), 136–37 (reprinted in Henning: *Selected Papers*, 2:142–43); Puech, *Le manichéisme*, 66–67, 149 nn. 259–61.

³⁶ Taqīzādeh-Šīrāzī, *Mānī va dīn-e-ū*, 159; cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* (trans. Dodge), 2:794. Compare *Acta Archelai* 11.3; Titus of Bostra, *Contra Manichaeos* (see *Titi Bostreni contra Manichaeos libri quatuor syriace*, ed. Paul A. de Lagarde [Berlin: C. Schultze, 1859], 129).

³⁷ See especially Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, “Tahrīf,” *ET* 10:111–12; idem, “Muslim Medieval Attitudes towards the Qur’an and the Bible,” in Patlagean and Le Boulluec, *Les retours aux Écritures*, 253–67.

³⁸ Ps-Clementine *Homilies* 2.38; 3.47–48. See Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949), 148–87; Georg Strecker, “The Kerygmata Petrou,” in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2:102–27; idem, “On the Problem of Jewish Christianity,” in Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest*

that many of the later Chaldean dualist sects emerged, including most importantly for our purposes, Manichaeism.³⁹ Is it possible that Mani was conversant with the divergent forms or even the redactional history of the biblical book of Genesis? Is it possible that when he prepared his rendering of those traditions he was consciously reintroducing or reintegrating elements that stemmed from a more primitive rendition of the text than those represented by its present canonical forms?

Manichaeism uses a “corrective” reading of the initial chapters of Genesis that frequently applies and exploits motifs drawn from what are arguably earlier renditions of the principal Genesis narratives, especially those which highlight topics and motifs associated with that school of authors biblical source critics identify as the Priestly source (P).⁴⁰ Several distinctive features of the Priestly account of primeval history (fuller forms of which may still be visible in parascriptural sources like *Jubilees*, *1 Enoch*, rabbinic and early medieval collections of midrash, and later Christian and Muslim compilations of exegetical lore) would seem to require only minimal adjustment by Mani (at least from the point of view of mature Manichaeism) in order to integrate them within the Manichaean system of discourse. These include: (1) the Priestly source’s general affinity with Mesopotamian⁴¹ traditions pertaining to primeval history; (2) the largely asexual nature of the creative process itself;⁴² (3) the notion that humanity came into being as a conscious imitation or copy of an androgynous divine entity;⁴³ (4) a plurality of divine beings;⁴⁴ (5) a strict abhorrence of unsanctioned bloodshed;⁴⁵ and (6) the apparent prominence of the figure of Enoch as a crucial transitional charac-

Christianity, ed. Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 241–85.

³⁹ See John C. Reeves, “The ‘Elchasaite Sanhedrin’ of the Cologne Mani Codex in Light of Second Temple Jewish Sectarian Sources,” *JJS* 42 (1991): 68–91; Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China* (2d ed.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992), 33–85.

⁴⁰ I.e., Gen 1:1–2:4a; 5:1–28, 30–32a; 6:9–14 + portions of the Flood narrative.

⁴¹ As opposed to autochthonous Canaanite or revisionist Deuteronomistic ones.

⁴² Both the Priestly (Gen 1:1–2:4a) and Manichaean myths of cosmogony emphasize linguistic rather than sexual or demiurgic modes of creation. See Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, 201 n. 20.

⁴³ Gen 1:26–27 with its emphasis upon the creation of Adam in the divine “image and likeness” is a crucial text in the elaboration of both creation myths.

⁴⁴ Gen 1:26 (“let *us* create Adam”) plus the consistent employment of the grammatically plural term *’elohim* for the deity(s).

⁴⁵ According to pentateuchal source critics, the Priestly source lacked the Eden (2:4b–3:24) and the Cain and Abel (4:1–24) stories, both of which contain instances involving the possible or actual mortal spilling of blood. For the importance of this point, see Reeves, “Some Explorations,” 52–58.

ter in its narrative flow.⁴⁶ It is abundantly clear that Mani invested signal importance in the biblical character of Enoch, for he recognized him as an authentic avatar of the Manichaean Apostle of Light and as an important author of and conduit for revelatory scriptures such as are now found in *1* and *2 Enoch*.⁴⁷ Thanks to some chance archaeological finds and the brilliant perspicacity of Jozef T. Milik, we now know that Mani expropriated and adapted a previously unknown Second Temple era Jewish work—one that featured Enoch as a prominent character—into one of the canonical scriptures of Manichaeism, the so-called *Book of Giants*.⁴⁸ It is equally probable that Mani—or an early follower—was skillfully adept in the outright forgery of Enochic literature, a talent which later generations of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scribes also cultivated; this might explain the otherwise unknown “Apocalypse of Enoch” cited by the *Cologne Mani Codex*⁴⁹ and could go a long way toward clarifying the problem of when, where, and by whom the so-called *Similitudes* (now embedded and christianized as *1 Enoch* 37–71) were initially produced.⁵⁰

Important textual evidence for Mani’s apparent access to pre-canonical forms of what would eventually become the scriptural edition of the initial

⁴⁶ It seems possible that Enoch functioned as the flood-hero in the *Urform* of the biblical Priestly source. The traditions surrounding the ultimate fate of Enoch are conceptually cognate with those associated with Mesopotamian flood-heroes like Ziusudra, Atrahasis, and Utnapishtim.

⁴⁷ Mani’s esteem for Enoch and the literature associated with that forefather’s name was emphasized by Isaac de Beausobre, *Histoire critique de Manichée et du manichéisme* (2 vols.; Amsterdam: J. F. Bernard, 1734–39), 1:428–29; Walter B. Henning, “Ein manichäisches Henochbuch,” *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1934): 27–35; idem, “The Book of the Giants,” *BSOAS* 11 (1943–46): 52–74. See also John C. Reeves, “An Enochic Motif in Manichaean Tradition,” in *Manichaica Selecta: Studies Presented to Professor Julien Ries on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Alois van Tongerloo and Søren Giversen (Louvain: International Association of Manichaean Studies, 1991), 295–98; idem, “Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Manichaean Literature: The Influence of the Enochic Library,” in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (SBLEJL 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 173–203; idem, *Heralds*, 5–30; 39–42; 183–206.

⁴⁸ Jozef T. Milik, “Problèmes de la littérature hénochique à la lumière des fragments araméennes de Qumran,” *HTR* 64 (1971): 333–78; idem, “Turfân et Qumran, Livre des Géants juif et manichéen,” in *Tradition und Glaube: Das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt*, ed. Gret Jeremias, et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 117–27; idem, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 298–339; Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, 51–164; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary* (TSAJ 63; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1997).

⁴⁹ CMC 58.6–60.12, as transcribed by Ludwig Koenen and Cornelia Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex...Kritische Edition* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988), 38–40. The likely spurious character of this “citation” has been suggested by David Frankfurter, “Apocalypses Real and Alleged in the Mani Codex,” *Numen* 44 (1997): 60–73; see also Reeves, *Heralds* 17; 197–211.

⁵⁰ With the significant exception of early Manichaean sources originating in Mesopotamia, there is no textual evidence for the existence of the *Similitudes* prior to its inclusion in the Ethiopic version of what modern scholars call *1 Enoch*. Almost no one has given this physical situation the attention it deserves.

chapters of the biblical book of Genesis emerges from a reconsideration of his usage of the ancient Jewish tale about the cataclysmic effects of an illegitimate union of errant divine beings and mortal women. This story, tersely recounted in Gen 6:1–4, highlights several levels of tension among the supernatural and terrestrial worlds that Mani found useful for the elaboration of episodes within his cosmogonic scheme:

And it happened that when humanity began to increase upon the surface of the earth and female progeny were born to them, the divine beings noticed the female humans, for they were lovely, and so they acquired wives for themselves from among whomsoever they chose....⁵¹ The *Nefilim* were on the earth during those days, and also afterwards, when the divine beings were consorting with female humans and they bore (children) for them. These were the giants/heroes of antiquity, the famous individuals.

This passage has generated intense discussion over the past two centuries of biblical scholarship, especially with regard to the precise identification of the enigmatic *Nefilim* of verse 4 as well as concerning the entire pericope's literary relationship to much fuller renditions of the story found in parascriptural sources like *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* where the divine beings of verses 2 and 4 are identified with a particular class of angels termed "Watchers." A detailed rehearsal of the various arguments offered in solution to these difficulties is not necessary for our present purposes. Using the testimony of other biblical passages and early versional evidence (e.g., the Old Greek and *Targum Onkelos*), most scholars accept the term "Nefilim" as synonymous with "giants," reading it as the nominal antecedent of the pronoun *hemah* ("these, they") that introduces the final clause of verse 4.⁵² Accordingly, the designation *Nefilim* would designate the same class of beings—the giants—who are represented as being the miscegenate offspring of the divine and mortal realms.⁵³

⁵¹ Omitting the problematic and misplaced Gen 6:3: "And the Lord said: 'My spirit cannot abide among humanity forever inasmuch as it is flesh; its days will be one hundred and twenty years.'" Compare the wording of 4Q252 1 1 & 2 1–3: "And God said: 'My spirit cannot endure humans forever; their days will be fixed at one hundred and twenty years until the time of the Flood-waters.'" The latter text is cited from the edition of George J. Brooke in *Qumran Cave 4 XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* (DJD 22; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 193. To extrapolate from the textual and thematic evidence supplied by both the Mesopotamian flood-traditions and *Jubilees* 5, Gen 6:3 would have originally been located *after* the Deluge but *prior* to the earth's resettlement.

⁵² E.g., Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (5th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922), 58, who views "giants/heroes" as a less mythologically charged gloss to the problematic "Nefilim."

⁵³ Excellent discussions of this evidence are available in Philip S. Alexander, "The Targumim and Early Exegesis of 'Sons of God' in Genesis 6," *JJS* 23 (1972): 60–71; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The 'Angels' and 'Giants' of Genesis 6:1–4 in Second and Third Century B.C.E. Jewish Interpretation: Reflections on the Posture of Early Apocalyptic Traditions," *DSD* 7 (2000): 354–77.

By contrast, an examination of the extant Manichaean mythological literature featuring the cast of *dramatis personae* familiar from Gen 6:1–4 and its parascriptural analogues produces a startlingly different picture. The divine beings are the “Watchers,” and Mani employs exactly the same terminology used in the Enochic literature.⁵⁴ Their progeny begotten on human women are “giants” or “monsters.” The “Nefilim” are “abortions,” a reading based on a play-on-words that is also found in an early midrashic interpretation of Gen 6:4.⁵⁵ While these “abortions” occasionally appear as the offspring of the Watchers, and hence can be consonant with “giants,” it is in fact much more common for them to be portrayed as equivalent to the Watchers. As Guy Stroumsa has succinctly and correctly observed, “Mani... practically identified the Watchers themselves with the abortions.”⁵⁶

Given Mani’s professed esteem for the scriptural authority of the ancestral religions, why would he endorse an exegetical identification that was at variance with what appears to be the plain meaning of the received text of Gen 6:4? The stock appeals to Mani’s duplicity, mendacity, or ignorance, charges that permeate the heresiological literature, are not persuasive in this instance. Mani seems thoroughly conversant with the tales and traditions that accumulated around the antediluvian generations of humanity, a reservoir of narrative lore that was cultivated and mediated through a variety of biblicist circles inhabiting the Roman and Sasanian Near East. It was Franz Cumont, puzzling over this very point almost a century ago, who signaled the path toward its resolution: « Il paraît impossible d’admettre que la fable manichéenne, très développée, soit sortie de ce court verset de la Genèse [i.e., 6:4], mais on peut se demander si celui-ci ne résume pas une antique légende sémitique, que Mâni aurait connue.”⁵⁷ One can conclude, in other words, that Mani was acquainted with a more primitive and hence more authentic form of the myth that he deemed superior to its present canonical expression in Gen 6:1–4.

Largely unnoticed by most biblical scholars is a persistent, widely attested, and undoubtedly ancient trend within parascriptural literature that understood the *Nefilim* of Gen 6:4 to be not “giants” but “fallen angels.” One arguable early instance of this equation is found in 1QapGen ar II:1: “then I [i.e., Lamech, the father of Noah] considered whether the pregnancy was due to the Watchers or to the Holy Ones or to the Nefil[im/n],” a passage where the term “Nefilim” seems to be semantically parallel with the

⁵⁴ Henning, “Book of the Giants,” 53.

⁵⁵ See *Gen. Rab.* 26.7. The relevance of this midrash to Mani’s reading of Gen 6:4 was first pointed out by Theodor Nöldeke, *ZDMG* 43 (1889): 536.

⁵⁶ Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 160; see also 161–62.

⁵⁷ Franz Cumont and Marc-Antoine Kugener, *Recherches sur le manichéisme* (Bruxelles: H. Lamertin, 1908–12), 41–42 n. 4; cf. also Stroumsa, *Another Seed*, 161.

designations “Watchers” and “Holy Ones.”⁵⁸ Another early (i.e., pre-Destruction) expression of the identity or equivalence of the beings termed Watchers and Nefilim occurs in the Qumran *Damascus Document* (CD 2.18): “by their proceeding in the stubbornness of their hearts *the heavenly Watchers fell (naflu)*: they were ensnared by it for they did not observe the commandments of God.”⁵⁹ By its choice of verb,⁶⁰ the *Damascus Document* here invites its reader/auditor to associate the Watchers with the “fallen ones” (i.e., the apparent semantic sense of the morpheme “Nefilim”), thereby exemplifying a popular interpretative encoding that recurs throughout late antique and medieval Jewish recountals of the legend.⁶¹ In addition to relying upon this learned wordplay, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen 6:4 makes a bold identification of the “Nefilim” in Gen 6:4 with the two leaders of the Watchers who are named in *1 Enoch* 6–11: “Shemhazai and ‘Azazel fell (*naflu*) from heaven and were on earth in those days.”⁶² A final even though temporally late example of this same interpretive trajectory figures in the *Zohar*:

Our teachers of blessed memory have said: At the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam, he created him in the Garden of Eden and instructed him to observe seven commandments. He transgressed and was expelled from the Garden of Eden. Then two heavenly angels—‘Uzza and ‘Azazel⁶³—said before the Holy One,

⁵⁸ See the discussion of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I: A Commentary* (2d ed.; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971), 80–81.

⁵⁹ The antiquity of this language is confirmed by 4Q266 (4QD^b) 2 ii 2. It should be noted that the same verb (*naflu*) is also used of the Watchers’ giant progeny in the immediately succeeding lines. One would thus be tempted to argue that the *Damascus Document* maintains that the term Nefilim can refer to *both* fallen angels and giants, an interpretative position which we have seen was duplicated by Mani.

⁶⁰ As *1 En.* 6:6 and *Jub.* 4:15 clearly illustrate, the favorite pun for the earthly arrival of the angelic Watchers was an assonance between forms of the verbal stem *yrd* and the proper name Yared, the father of Enoch, during whose lifetime the descent allegedly took place. Note also 1QapGen 3.3. The choice instead of the stem *npl* for the same “journey” is thus exegetically governed by the form “Nefilim.”

⁶¹ See *Pirqe R. El.* §7 (ed. Luria 16b): “the angels who fell (*šenaflu*) from their exalted positions and from their holy stations in heaven”; *ibid.* §22 (ed. Luria 50b–51a): “the angels who fell (*šenaflu*) from their holy stations in heaven”; *’Aggadat Bereshit* in Ms. Oxford Bodl. 2340 (published in Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 331–32): “the Nefilim...this refers to ‘Uzza and ‘Azazel,” where the immediately preceding passage had labeled these two angels as the “divine beings” of Gen 6:2; *Ba’al ha-Turim* to Gen 6:4: “[the Nefilim are] Shemhazai and ‘Azazel, and they fell (*naflu*) from heaven during the time of the generation of the Flood.” See also *Zohar* 1.25a–b; 1.37a; 1.58a; and 3.144a. Further examples of this same equivalence can be culled from Syriac and Arabic language sources.

⁶² Translated from the text published as *Targum Yonatan ben ‘Uzziel ‘al hamishah humshey Torah*, ed. David Rieder (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1974), 9. See also Reuven Margalit, *Mal’akey ‘elyon* (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1945), 292.

⁶³ ‘Uzza (sometimes ‘Azza) and ‘Azazel are the rabbinic reflexes of Enochic Shemhazai and ‘Azazel. On the identity of ‘Uzza/‘Azza and Shemhazai, see Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, 113.

blessed be He: “If we were on earth, we would be meritorious!” The Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: “Could you prevail against the evil impulse?” They responded before Him: “We would prevail!” *Immediately the Holy One, blessed be He, cast them down, as scripture says: “the Nefilim were on the earth” (Gen 6:4), and it is written “the mighty ones, etc.” (ibid.).* At the time they descended to earth, the evil impulse entered into them, as scripture says: “they acquired wives for themselves from whomever they chose” (Gen 6:2). They transgressed and thus were uprooted from their holy stations on this account.⁶⁴

Passages such as these just cited demonstrate that Mani was not unique in effecting an assimilation between the heavenly Watchers and the mysterious *Nefilim* of Gen 6:4; there was ample philological and narratological precedent. But one may perhaps go even further and hypothesize upon the basis of this evidence that Mani knew a form of this Jewish myth in which “Watchers” and “Nefilim” denoted two distinct sets of angelic beings who descended to earth at different times.

Some biblical scholars have observed that the present canonical form of Gen 6:1–4 appears to conflate two or more separate legends regarding the descent of angels from heaven to earth. According to this view, the *Nefilim* were originally a class of beings distinct from both the angels implicated in sexual activity with human women and the resultant race of Giants.⁶⁵ If these scholars are right, this would mean that the present form of Gen 6:1–4 is a relatively late apologetic text deliberately crafted by one of the final redactors of the early chapters of Genesis in order to subvert and ultimately defuse an older potentially explosive mythological cycle of tales relating the history of intercourse between the terrestrial and celestial realms. Examples of these more diffuse narratives are visible in older parascriptural sources like *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*. This relative sequencing of antediluvian biblical legends—from very prolix to cryptically terse—runs counter to how most modern scholars reconstruct the literary history of Genesis,⁶⁶ but it explains why Mani would conflate Watchers and *Nefilim* and why he would value Enochic literature over the “canonical” form of the book of Genesis.

⁶⁴ Tosefta *ad* Zohar 1.37a; cf. Margaliot, *Mal’akey ‘elyon*, 276.

⁶⁵ See Julian Morgenstern, “The Mythological Background of Psalm 82,” *HUCA* 14 (1939): 85–86; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 377–79; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 76.

⁶⁶ There is an almost universal presumption that parascriptural works like *1 Enoch* 6–16 and *Jubilees* 4–5, 10:1–17 are expansions of and hence derivative from Gen 6:1–4. As presently perpetuated in the scholarly literature, this presumption can no longer withstand critical scrutiny. See especially Milik, *Books of Enoch*, 30–32; Philip R. Davies, “Sons of Cain,” in *A Word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane*, ed. James D. Martin and Philip R. Davies (JSOT-Sup 42; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986), 46–50.

Conclusion

Insofar as it is a discursive reformulation or recasting of a “misunderstood scripture” in order to insure that its “true” meaning is not obscured, Mani’s corrective reading of this portion of Genesis functions the same way as those historiographical texts David Biale and Amos Funkenstein have usefully termed “counterhistories.” This is a genre whose justification is described by Biale as “the belief that the true history lies in a subterranean tradition that must be brought to light.”⁶⁷ Funkenstein adds that “counterhistories form a specific genre of history written since antiquity...their function is polemical [and t]heir method consists of the systematic exploitation of the adversary’s most trusted sources against their grain.”⁶⁸ They offer, in other words, a competing version of a foundational narrative “history.” Typical examples of such “counterhistories,” according to Funkenstein, would include the Egyptian historian Manetho’s polemical account of the Israelite exodus from Egypt and the library of medieval Jewish *Toledot Yeshu* texts generated in response to the Christian gospels. Both of these examples are instructive, for they both utilize and yet subtly exploit the primary plot, characters, and elements of their target narratives in order to undermine and discredit them among literate social communities. Mani’s radical reading of the canonical Genesis narrative employs the same tactic in order to accomplish a similar end, “restoring” in the process what he held to be a more pristine and textually authentic (that is, “scriptural”) expression of the Manichaean revelation.

⁶⁷ David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 11.

⁶⁸ Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 36.

Piet F. M. Fontaine

What is Dualism, and What is it Not?

We have, as human beings, two ways of ordering the confused mass of phenomena in the midst of which we live. The first is to combine related phenomena under specific headings (such as country, sport, feudalism, government, education); some of these headings have an all-embracing character (world, universe, history). The second way is to make pairs of phenomena (day and night, summer and winter, love and hate, life and death, man and woman). All of us use these two ways of ordering the world every day many times.

There is always a certain opposition between the terms of pairs because they are not identical: day is not night, summer is not winter. Such oppositions are mostly of a mild kind; they can turn into each other: between day and night there is dusk, between summer and winter there are autumn and spring. Much depends on the point of view of the observer. A person who, coming out of the polar cold of a winter night, enters an unheated room, may find it comfortable, whereas another, coming from a well-heated room, may shiver in it.

It is possible, though, to place an ever heavier accent on the poles of the opposition and to widen the distance between them. Think, for instance, of the opposition between life and death; a dead person does not live anymore. Yet one who is lying in coma and whose brainstem is dead exists in a no man's land between life and death. But the gap between the poles may become still deeper and broader, until, finally, it is unbridgeable. Or must we say that persons, or rather certain persons, feel the need to push an opposition to the extremes? If this is the case, we must speak of "dualism."

In cases of dualism, it is no longer possible to reduce the terms of the opposition more or less to each other; there are no longer intermediate terms; there is no longer any relationship or connection at all between the terms. The opposition has become unsolvable. The poles of the opposition always differ in quality; there is a superior one and an inferior one. The lesser one is denigrated, vilified, rejected, or will eventually be destroyed. The dualistic opposition may be one between principles or systems or ideologies or organizations or sects or groups of people or even between persons.

There are many kinds of dualism, but the most important are radical and relative dualism. In radical dualism, the terms of the opposition each exist in their own right, as equals so to speak. The most forceful opposition of

this kind—the one that has been the most productive—is that between good and evil. In the relative form, the inferior pole is dependent on the superior one. For example, in classical Athenian society, the relationship of men and women was dualistic, but a wife was dependent on her husband, a daughter on her father. Relative dualism is sometimes called “moderate”; this is an inappropriate term, for how can an unsolvable opposition be “moderate”?

Although dualism is a phenomenon as old as the world, the specific terms “dualism” and “dualistic” are of fairly recent origin. “Dualist” was the first to appear, in a book published in 1700 by Thomas Hyde, professor of Hebrew in Oxford University.¹ Since this book dealt with the ancient Persian religion, the term “dualist” (and also “dualism”) was at first thought to refer specifically to Iranian dualism. The term “dualist” became widely known when Pierre Bayle inserted it into an article on “Zoroaster” in the second edition of his famous dictionary (1702).²

The term “dualism” proper was used for the first time by Christian Wolff in his *Psychologia rationalis* of 1734.³ Wolff transferred the concept from the sphere of religion, to which it had been restricted by Hyde, Bayle, and also Leibniz in his theodicy of 1710, to that of philosophy, by stating that dualism also denoted the substantial difference of the spiritual and corporeal, the immaterial and the material.

It is, on the whole, not so difficult to detect dualistic phenomena or to distinguish them from non-dualistic ones. It might be a help if we pay attention to the following elements, which can be used as divining rods: vegetarianism, esotericism, dogmatism, the authoritarian attitude, elitism, the tragic sentiment, pessimism, fatalism, shamanism, gnosticizing, magic, puritanism, and machism. None of these concepts is necessarily dualistic, but as more of them come together in systems of thought, in ways of acting or modes of living, the nearer we are to a full-grown dualism.

There are with regard to dualism a number of misunderstandings afloat. The first involves a question of terminology. We should dub all oppositions that can be resolved “dualities,” whereas the unresolvable ones are “dualistic.” Duality and dualism are not interchangeable terms; they must be carefully kept apart. Fortunately, the vast majority of oppositions, the dualities, can be resolved and are resolved. The dualisms form a minority, still large enough, though, to occupy our attention.

A second point is that we must not think that dualism occurs only in the history of religions and, perhaps, also in philosophical systems. I see absolutely no reason why unresolvable oppositions would not occur in history,

¹ Thomas Hyde, *Historia religionis veterum Persarum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1760), ch. 9.

² Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (2nd ed.; Brandmuller, 1702), 3079–80.

³ Christian Wolff, *Psychologia rationalis* (Renger, 1734), sect. I, ch. I, § 39.

in politics, in social life, and even in the personal sphere. Everyone knows persons who have broken off all contact with one another and who hate one another from the depth of their hearts. In his book *The Other God*, Yuri Stoyanov mentioned the Roman historian of religion Ugo Bianchi as a scholar who restricts the term “dualism” to a “religio-historic context,” and Simone Pétrement and me as scholars who apply a much broader definition.⁴

Thirdly, there is the widespread notion that the birthplace of dualism is ancient Iran, in Zoroastrianism, of course, or else in Manichaeism. Journalists are fond of dubbing oppositions “Manichaean.” “Iran is the classical country of dualism,” thus runs the very first sentence of Duchesne-Guillemin’s little book on Iranian religion.⁵ This idea is very popular. In my opinion this is so because historians and other scholars display a strong tendency to pinpoint phenomena on a timeline, in order to give them a definite and recognizable beginning.

We must, however, conceive of dualism as an anthropological phenomenon, which means that it can emerge and occur in every civilization, in all periods of history, and in all walks of life. Dualism is not an intellectual system; neither is it an ideology, a philosophy, or a religion. Instead, it is a mental phenomenon, something psychological. It exists, like beauty, in the beholder’s eye (or mind). For this reason we cannot compare it to non-dualistic systems, because a dualistic complex and a non-dualistic system are things of a different order. The term “dualistic system” is basically a *contradictio in adiecto*.

In spite of this, there have been a number of attempts to create dualistic systems. There are not many of them. The most characteristic of these are the Gnostic ideologies, with their successors in Catharism and New Age movements. I mention also national-socialism, not with respect to its election programmes, which were mere demagoguery, but in its undiluted Hitlerite form.

Often “monism” is posited as the opposite of dualism. What the “holistics” with whom the concept of monism is very much in favour, tend to forget is that, by positing the opposition monism-dualism as an “either-or,” they are turning it into a dualistic opposition.⁶ Monism and dualism are chips of the same block, products of the same defective view of the world. Monism can even generate dualism. It is not possible to place all meta-

⁴ Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁵ Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, *Ormazd et Ahriman. L'aventure dualiste dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953).

⁶ Ludwig Stein, *Dualismus und Monismus. Eine Untersuchung über die doppelte Wahrheit* (Berlin: Reichl, 1909), 14.

physical, cosmic, social, and human phenomena under one single heading; remnants will remain, which refuse to fit into the monistic pattern.

Such remnants will rebel against the monistic monopoly; since not all kinds of reality can be forced into one single straightjacket, this will lead to a dualistic situation. A case in point is pantheism to which many people in all centuries have paid homage. It literally means that the godhead is fully identical with the order of creation. The godhead then becomes indistinguishable from the created world. We may say that all is matter, just as we are entitled to say that all is god. But if the godhead remains distinct from the created order, however slightly, then pantheism is not complete; in this case it is not what it pretends to be.

Often indeed we see that a philosophical or religious system begins with a monistic startingpoint, but becomes dualistic one stage lower. An example in the religious field is Zoroastrianism, which is commonly described as thoroughly dualistic. It begins, however, with a monistic dogma. There is only one god to be venerated, Ahura Mazdâ, the Wise Lord. Yet Zoroaster's system is not as monistic as it appears. For there is also Angra Mainyu, the Hostile Spirit, who is the ancient enemy of Ahura Mazdâ and who is the origin of evil. In this way Zoroaster succeeds in combining his monotheistic (or monistic) startingpoint with his dualistic views.

The problem with dualism is that it is something disruptive, something that causes fissions, that pushes apart. For this reason it can never be a positive element in societies and civilizations; nothing definite or stable can be built on it. However, the dominating trend of mankind is to be "social," to come together and to hold together, to strive after peace and harmony. We desire to be constructive and not disruptive. Yet as Karen Blixen wrote in her novel *Out of Africa*, "the world, after all, is not a regular and calculable place."⁷ No human community, no culture, is wholly without faultlines. There is always an urge operative towards radicalizing oppositions, an urge that can have disastrous consequences. Where there is such an urge, we speak of dualism.

Sometimes dualistic elements do not pose much of a problem, although they are never harmless, but sometimes they present a very great danger, threatening to destabilize or even to destroy the social fabric. Nonetheless, even if a society is riddled with dualistic elements, the urge towards organic unity remains the domineering one or else there would be no society. Even philosophical or religious systems can hardly be entirely dualistic, for if they were, they would abolish themselves. There is always a point where they hang together or a solid ground upon which they are built. When Des-

⁷ Isak Dinesen, *Out of Africa* (London: Putnam, 1937).

cartes, a dualist *par excellence*, said: “*Cogito, ergo sum*,” his thinking itself was that solid ground.

If dualism is basically an anthropological, a human phenomenon, it must express a human proclivity. In most people this proclivity rarely, if ever, comes to the surface or not at all. Yet in others it becomes a definite attitude, which colours their whole conception of life, their way of thinking, their behaviour, and their relations with their fellow-beings. I am quite sure that personal circumstances can kindle the propensity to dualism that, perhaps, is slumbering in every human being; usually such circumstances will occur in early youth or in adolescence. In antiquity we are poorly endowed with detailed autobiographies; only rarely we get a glimpse of personal developments. It is only in the cases of Plato, the apostle John, and the prophet Mani that we are able to describe how and why a possibly innate tendency towards dualism grew stronger in the course of their lives.

For later times we are much better equipped. Let me restrict myself to one case, that of Adolf Hitler, the greatest and fiercest dualist of modernity. It is a fair guess that some are born with a tendency to radicalism; it is in their genes. If this is correct, then Adolf Hitler was one of these people. Even when he attended primary school, this tendency was apparent. He was a child of very unequal parents, father Alois, a harsh and authoritarian man, much older than his wife, and mother Klara, a weak and subjected woman. The boy Adolf grew up on the faultline between his parents, bullied by his father, but spoiled by his mother.

Until he was twenty-five years old, he was a good-for-nothing, but then came his first existential experience. In August 1914 he enlisted as a volunteer in a Bavarian regiment; the next four years he spent in the trenches of the Western front. There he learned that life is a fight against enemies who must be destroyed. There he learned the significance of the “either-or” typical of dualism. When he began to engage in politics in 1919, he was already a radical. The next great experience came in June 1934, when he rooted out the leadership of the SA in the Night of Long Knives. This was his first murderous action. Hermann Goering said of Hitler that after this episode he was like a tiger that had tasted blood. Henceforward he spared no one, not even himself.

So much for personal circumstances. Could it also be that there is something in the fabric of the world—fissures, rifts, anomalies—that makes the world an incalculable place? I am not pretending that such things have a direct influence on people or that they are conscious of them, but it could be that there is a general climate of uncertainty to which some people are more sensitive than others. First of all, there are paradoxes, which are resistant to all attempts to set them right (for instance, the famous liar paradox). Then there is Gödel’s theorem, known as the “incompleteness theorem.” It says

that every logico-mathematical system contains an anomaly that can only be solved with the help of a higher system, which in its turn falls prey to the same principle. This means that perfectly logical logic is impossible.

Yet another anomaly is that the first and the second laws of thermodynamics are incompatible with each other. The first law is that of the conservation of energy, which means that the total amount of energy in the universe never diminishes; the second law is that of entropy, which means that there will be ever less energy.

Next there is the shift in atomic theory to quantum mechanics. This new theory made an end of the famous atomic model of Bohr, which the reader will probably remember from secondary school. In this model the particles of an atom describe neatly delineated orbits around a nucleus. Quantum mechanics abandons the idea that these particles can be localized. Neither their location nor their speed can be determined at any given moment; there are no longer coordinates but only relations, appropriately called “uncertainty relations” by Werner Heisenberg.

The philosophical consequences of this new theory are immense. The realm of reality seems to have become dualistically divided between a world we can observe, describe, imagine, and comprehend, and another, deeper world that is beyond every form of comprehension and imagination. And this second world is thought to be the basic one on which all reality rests. I for one see this as a “derealization of reality.” The mental effects of all this are probably not very healthy. Of course, hardly anybody knows what quantum mechanics is. But lessons in school, popular expositions, and television programs have fostered the vague but unpleasant impression that the core of reality is a seething and dangerous volcano. People couple this with the fear they have of nuclear fission, in particular of atomic bombs and nuclear warheads, but also of nuclear plants. All this has a destabilizing effect and makes people feel uncertain and threatened in their own world.

There is more. Our time seems to be the apogee of a long and violent history; there has been hardly a year in world history without war. There is a curious and painful discrepancy between our longing for peace and profound desire to be spared the horrors of war, and the constant recurrence of this form of violence on a large scale. Yet war is not the direst anomaly with which mankind has to cope. There is another, much more painful one, striking even deeper far, because it eats into the very core of our existence. It is death. Death is an anomaly, a non-concept; the idea of life is incompatible with that of death. This is a profound dualism that we all experience. It is for all these reasons that Louis Menand spoke of “the incommensurability of the world,” which, in his view, is the matrix of dualism.

The climactic question now confronting us is whether it is possible to write a history of dualism. If I remain true to myself, I should deny this. As

I said before, dualism is something disruptive; it appears in the form of erratic blocks. One could write a history of my hometown Amsterdam, or of the United States, or of feudalism, or Buddhism, or horticulture. All these subjects are organisms or complexes that can be discursively described. Yet dualism is something inorganic. Even so, there are so many dualisms around; they often have such an effect on the life of societies and individuals that it is necessary to make them the subject of a disquisition. When people ask me why I occupy myself with dualism, I always gave the answer Edmund Hillary gave when asked why he climbed Mount Everest, "because it is there." From a scholarly point of view this a *ratio sufficiens*.

A Dutch publisher once suggested to me that I should compose a dictionary or encyclopaedia of dualism. But I feel that it would not do justice to such a vast, important, and often dramatic subject to turn it into a series of entries. Not to mention the fact that an encyclopaedia is not what is called "a good read." After all, I am a historian of the old narrative school. Long ago Ugo Bianchi wrote that a "world history of dualism" is needed. Much later Ioan Couliano, the victim of a vile political murder, stated that the dualism of the West has a social history but added, in the same breath, that he would not write it.

Since 1976 I have been working on a world history of dualism; Volume XVIII of my series *The Light and the Dark* appeared a short while ago. I make two provisos. I spread my research much further than the West alone, and it is a "social" history, not a sociology of dualism. I dodged the question of whether it is possible to write a history of dualism by giving my work the subtitle of *A Cultural History of Dualism*. The term "cultural" covers, like love, a multitude of sins. It means that I treat dualism as a cultural and historical phenomenon in the widest sense, situating it in its context of social and historico-political circumstances and in its connexion with historical events and with cultures and civilizations. I solved the problem of a history of dualism not being possible by proceeding thematically and, within the themes, chronologically. Volume X, for instance, is entirely devoted to "imperialistic dualism" in Roman history, Volume XIII to "the struggle between orthodoxy and heterodoxy in the early Christian Church."

It would be an impossible task to present the history of dualism within the context of this essay. Dualistic phenomena appear, as I have said, in all times and in all civilizations; it really is a *mer à boire*. Let me, therefore, restrict myself to two phenomena, which both have a very long history and also show some sort of historical cohesion. They are imperialism and Gnosticism.

Imperialism is one of the most important dualistic themes. Imperialism is a case of monism, because there is one single centre from which and by which all is regulated. As I have already explained, monism generates dual-

ism, in this case the resistance of the subjected nations. The history of the *Imperium Romanum* is one long tale of revolts. An imperial power imposes its will on other ethnic and political entities, which are then compelled to accept it. If they refuse, they are fought, thrown down, or even destroyed. Think of Caesar's ruthless conquest of Gaul: nine years of campaigning proved disastrous for the Celtic population.

Imperialism is a phenomenon of very old standing. It began five thousand years ago with the small empires of Sumer and Akkad in what is now Iraq and later, in the same region, the much larger empires of Assyria and Babylonia, which in their turn were conquered and swallowed up by the enormous Persian empire. Alexander led his armies onto the foothills of the Hindu Kush. His empire was the largest the world had seen, but it soon fragmented into the Kingdoms of the Diadochoi.

The imperialistic centre of gravity then shifted to the West, to Rome, which, in seven centuries of warfare, conquered and subjected countless nations and states in Europe, Africa, and Asia, often using an extremely firm grip to keep them down. The Roman Empire had two successors, the Byzantine Empire in the East and the Carolingian and the Holy Roman Empires in the West. Byzantine history is in fact one long history of losing ground, in the Balkans to the Slav peoples, and in Asia Minor and the Middle East first to the Neopersian empires and then, together with the Neopersians, to the Arab and Turkish empires. In the West Charlemagne tarnished his reputation by his brutal and bloody subjection of the Saxons. The Holy Roman Empire was the source of many dualistic conflicts, in Germany itself with the great feudal lords, in North Italy with the cities, and with the Popes in Rome.

Since the end of the Middle Ages there has been in Europe no permanent imperialistic power, although there have been intermittent outbursts of imperialism, including that of Louis XIV and of Adolf Hitler. Intra-European imperialism was replaced by colonial imperialism. From the fifteenth century until the second half of the twentieth Western European powers conquered, subjected, colonized, and exploited numberless nations in the greater part of the world. For example, in its heyday the Dutch colonial empire was eighty times as large as the mother country.

I am always astonished that Gnosticism is so little known among scholars. Gnosticism is extremely important, not only because it had a very long life and is still with us, but also because it is a form of dualism that is intellectually and socially well organized and is, in my view, the only one based on a two-worlds dualism.

First of all, what does this word "Gnosis" signify? It is the ordinary Greek word for "knowledge." But this is not knowledge everyone can acquire through experience of life, study, education, or professional expertise.

It is Knowledge with a capital, an esoteric, often secret knowledge, not publicly available. Much ink has been spilled in scholarly literature over the question of what makes a certain movement “Gnostic.” In my opinion we must apply the criterion of double dualism. There is a horizontal dualism of the upper and nether worlds and a vertical dualism of those who know and the ignorant.

Both dualisms are absolute. One cannot become a Gnostic or convert to it; one is it, or one is it not. Those who know will be saved. The others, the great majority, belong to the *massa damnata*; they are doomed. The upper world is that of the *Pleroma*, of the fullness, of fulfilment; it is the divine and supernatural realm of purity and wholeness. It is entirely spiritual; there is no matter in the *Pleroma*. This upper world stands in the sharpest possible opposition to the nether world, our world, for this is the realm of matter, of darkness, of sin, of decay.

Nonetheless, there is in every human being a particle of the upper world, a divine spark that has fallen from above into the nether world. All men and women possess this spark, the *pneuma*; a human being is not composed of body and soul, but of body, soul, and *pneuma*. Most people do not even know that there is this spark, this *pneuma*, in them; it does not interest them. Therefore, they remain stuck in matter and ignorance. Those who know this possess the saving Knowledge; they are the Gnostics, the knowing. They, and they alone, will be saved, that is, attain the *Pleroma*. However, they must leave their bodies behind, for bodies are matter, and there is no room for matter in the *Pleroma*. In consequence, there will be no resurrection of the bodies at the end of time and also no “new heaven and new earth.” The present world is doomed to destruction, together with the mass of the ignorant.

Epiphanius, the great expert on ancient heresies, mentions two hundred Gnostic sects, but there must have been more, perhaps some three hundred. Most of these were exceedingly small, but some attracted many followers. The biggest were the sects of Basilides and Valentinianus, both intellectually arresting, and further the Church of Marcion and Mani’s Church of Justice, the Manichaeans. Manichaeism was really a world religion with a lifespan of a thousand years and a large membership. We know that Saint Augustine belonged to it for some time. In Central Asia we can follow it until 1300.

There is still one Gnostic sect in existence, the Mandaeans; *Manda* signifies true knowledge. It is a baptist sect, living in the river delta of Iraq. Mandaeans live in the marshlands as boat builders and fishermen, but the Saddam regime robbed them of their livelihood by draining the marshes.

Was there a Christian Gnosis? The thesis that there was one is forcefully defended by my compatriot Gilles Quispel and by Elaine Pagels, who posits

that there are two branches of Christianity, the Roman Catholic religion and the Gnostic religion. There are surely some important points of resemblance between Christianity and Gnosticism. Both originated in the same corner of the world, the Palestinian-Syrian region, and in the same period, the first century of our era. More important is that both are religions of redemption. Yet here the resemblances end. In orthodox Christianity redemption is brought about by the cross of Jesus Christ, in the Gnosis by the saving Knowledge.

There was no Gnostic Church, but, instead, innumerable sects; there is no Gnostic Bible, but, instead, many, often contradictory Gnostic writings. The God of Judaism and orthodox Christianity, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, does not figure in Gnosticism. The Gnostic supreme divinity bears all kinds of names: the Great Boundless Power, the First Power, the Prime Principle, the Monad, the Depth. This divinity is largely an abstraction, not a person, and in all cases this figure is unknowable and unapproachable.

This figure is not the creator of heaven and earth; he abstains from all contact with matter. Our world, the cosmos, is created by a Demiurge, who is more often than not evil-intended and makes a mess of it. There is enormous evil in the world, but this is not the effect of original sin, but of something that went wrong in the creational process. The Demiurge is often identified with the God of the Old Testament, who, with a wrong vocalization of the Jahve name, is called "Jehova." The central figure of orthodox Christianity is Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus Christ. To Gnostic authors Christ is by no means the same person as Jesus. Christ is a pneumatic being, with no body of his own, but who used the body of Jesus.

In view of all this, it is a riddle to me why some scholars speak of "Christian Gnosis." Ask people what is the opposite of Christianity, and they will answer "paganism." However, paganism contains many pre-Christian elements: priest, temple, sacrifice, fire, and so on. The true opposite of Christianity, and a radical one at that, a dualistic one, is Gnosticism.

The ancient Gnosis had a long post-history. First of all, there is Islamic Gnosis. Important Gnostic elements can be found, not in orthodox Sunni Islam, but in the Shi'a, the religion of the Shi'ites, of whom we have heard so much in connection with the recent war in Iraq. Shi'i cosmology is purely Gnostic. There is still an Islamic-Gnostic sect, the Nusairi-Alawites. About twelve percent of the Syrian population are Alawites, including the former president Hafez al-Assad and the acting president, his son Bashar al-Assad. Important Gnostic elements are also manifest in Jewish Kabbalism, especially in Spanish Kabbalists.

The greatest manifestation of Gnosticism in medieval Europe was the Cathar religion of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with the basic dual-

ism of the two gods, one good, one bad. This led to a bloody dualistic struggle between the orthodox and the Cathars.

Following the Gnostic line further, we come to German mystics, in particular Jakob Boehme. In our days Gnostic elements reappear in theosophy, in modern science, with its esoteric Knowledge incomprehensible to ordinary mortals (Raymond Ruyer speaks of “the Gnosis of Princeton”), and also in various New Age movements, characterized by an expert, Wouter Hanegraaff, as “Post-Gnostic Gnosticism.” Let me quote him: “Truth can only be found by inner revelation, insight, or ‘enlightenment.’ Truth can only be personally experienced; in contrast with the knowledge of reason or faith, it is in principle not generally accessible. This ‘inner knowing’ cannot be transmitted by discursive knowledge (this would make into rational knowledge). Nor can it be the subject of faith, because there is in the last resort no other authority than personal, inner experience.” If this is correct, this is perfectly Gnostic. Given the popularity of New Age religion, Gnosticism is back among us.

Kalman P. Bland

Human-Animal Dualism in Modernity and Premodern Jewish Thought

All stories, if continued far enough, end in death, and he is no true-story teller who would keep that from you.¹

This venture in intellectual history begins with Frans De Waal and several passages from the Hebrew Bible. De Waal is a modern biologist. He studies culture and social behavior in chimpanzees and other primates. In his recent book, *The Ape and the Sushi Master*, he remarks on “the impression of being surrounded by two distinct categories of people: those who do and those who do not mind being compared with animals.”² De Waal chose his words carefully. Not to mind means to tolerate, not to feel bothered or take offense. Comparing *to* and comparing *with* denote distinct operations. For example, if they are reasonable, partisans of apples and oranges allow the objects of their affection to be compared with respect to cost, color, texture, flavor, and nutrition, but they would never agree that matchless apples or unrivaled oranges were surpassed by the other in status or merit. Similarly, no one is flustered when humans are compared *to* animals.

The troubles begin when humans are compared *with* animals. The idiom suggests evolutionary kinship, behavioral identity, or equivalence in value. The suggestion of kinship or parity with animals stirs controversy. Some Victorians minded the comparison. Other Victorians relished it. Think of the feisty exchange at Oxford University in 1860 between Thomas H. Huxley, Charles Darwin’s secular apostle, and Bishop Samuel Willberforce, Huxley’s conservative antagonist. The Bishop sarcastically wondered

¹ Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon* (New York: Scribner, 1932), 122. The happy discovery of this epigraph, like the essay it introduces, would have been inconceivable were it not for the extraordinarily conducive setting for scholarship created and maintained by the National Humanities Center (NHC) in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. The early versions of this essay were crafted and presented to my colleagues during the NHC Fellowship (Duke Endowment and National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow) I enjoyed in 2002–03. Let this essay, part of a larger project considering the human-animal boundary in medieval Jewish thought, be a token of my profound appreciation for NHC support and collegiality.

² Frans De Waal, *The Ape and the Sushi Master: Cultural Reflections of a Primatologist* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 10.

whether Huxley's grandfather or grandmother had been an ape.³ Some post-Victorians still find the comparison of humans with animals to be factually untrue, morally repugnant, or theologically unacceptable. Like William Jennings Bryan, they recoil in exasperated horror. In 1925 at the Scopes Trial in Tennessee, Bryan complained that "Darwin attempts to trace the mind of man back to the mind of animals [and]...endeavors to trace man's moral nature back to the animals. It is all animal, animal, animal with never a thought of God or religion."⁴ Other moderns, including Frans de Waal and the sociobiologists, find the comparison of humans *with* animals factually true, ethically relevant, and existentially liberating.⁵

For membership in the class of ancient people who anticipated Bishop Wilberforce and William Jennings Bryan in objecting to the comparison with animals, I nominate the author of Genesis 1. He compared humans to all other beings and concluded that they were alike with respect to being God's creatures. Profoundly concerned with food, he also observed that humans, birds, and land animals were alike with respect to diet. Land animals, birds, and humans were all originally instructed to be herbivores. Although he left the diet for fish unspecified, he conscientiously noted that the diet for humans was distinguished from the diet for land animals by the

³ For quotations and descriptions of the famous debate over Darwin's *Origin of the Species* at the annual meeting of the British Academy for the Advancement of Science, see Janet Browne, *Charles Darwin: The Power of Place* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 114–25, and Adrian Desmond, *Huxley: From Devil's Disciple to Evolution's High Priest* (Reading, Mass.: Perseus Books, 1994), 276–81.

⁴ Bryan intended to express these opinions during the course of the trial itself, but was outmaneuvered by counsels for the defense, obliging him to arrange for separate publication several days after the trial and hours before his death. For the quote and complete text of Bryan's posthumous "last speech," see "Text of Bryan's Proposed Address in Scopes Case," in *The World's Most Famous Court Trial: Tennessee Evolution Case* (Cincinnati: National Book Company, 1925), 321–39. "Animal, animal, animal..." is found at 326. For similar statements made during the trial, see 174–5. For a thorough and well-documented discussion of the Scopes trial, see Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). Eighty years later, the battle still rages. For a politically astute report of the most recent round of organized opposition to the teaching of Evolution in the public schools, see Thomas Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas?: How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004), 205–14.

⁵ Merely to sample the current state of scientific opinion, see Jane L. Gould and Carol Grant Gould, *The Animal Mind* (New York: Scientific American Library, 1999) and Marc D. Hauser, *Wild Minds: What Animals Really Think* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000). Merely to sample the current discussion of philosophic and moral implications, see Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1983), and James Rachels, *Created From Animals: The Moral Implications of Darwinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). For a broader historical perspective, critical discussion, and direct citations approaching encyclopedic coverage, see Rod Preece, *Awe for the Tiger, Love for the Lamb: A Chronicle of Sensibility to Animals* (New York: Routledge, 2002). Also rich in learning and brimming with useful critical insight is Matt Cartmill, *A View to Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature Through History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

exclusive human consumption of fruit produced by trees. Finally, he proclaimed that humans, fish, birds, and land animals were all alike in receiving an identical blessing from God: “be fruitful and multiply.”⁶ All of them were expected to “fill” their respective domains.

The list of commonalities is fascinating, but the notice of differential diet is decisive. It connotes the biblical or Genetic view of humanity’s exalted status. Exclusive access to fruit grown on trees is the behavioral counterpart to the belief expounded in Genesis 1 that primal man and woman were the only creatures to have been fashioned in God’s image, *be-tzelem elohim*. According to Genesis 9, this “image” justifies the ban on homicide; it also legitimates the killing and consumption of all animals for food after the blood has been drained from their flesh. Beyond its associations with homicide and privileged diet, the “image of God” is notoriously cryptic and subject to divergent interpretations. All the same, its underlying meaning is unambiguous. The phrase implies a rejection of mythological or totemic intuitions; it signifies a divinely intentioned, categorical distinction between humans and all other creatures.⁷ “Image of God” denotes that primal man and primal woman were given legitimate dominion over the whole earth, over all plants, fish, birds, and land animals. These three items—image of God, omnivorous diet, and dominion—may be said to constitute mankind’s Genetic superiority over all other earthlings. Echoes of Genetic dominion and divine image are audible in Psalms 8: “You have made [man] little less than the divine, and adorned him with glory and majesty. You have made him master (*tamshilehu*) over Your handiwork, laying the world at his feet. Sheep and oxen, all of them, and wild beasts, too; the birds of the heavens, the fish of the seas.”

⁶ For an illuminating discussion of the phrase and its implications, see Jeremy Cohen, “*Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It*”: *The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989).

⁷ In other strata of the Hebrew Bible, the categorical distinction between humans and animals is presupposed and swept away: “The notion of man’s preeminence was very likely formed in reaction to the neighboring pagan cultures with their animal gods, and it is as rooted in biblical thought as the archetypal oppositions of day and night, light and darkness, sea and dry land. But in the Song [of Songs] the name of God does not even appear, and there is no opposition between human and animal, no hierarchy, no dominion...The Song is filled with wonder for what the poet Denise Levertov calls ‘animal presence.’ When the lovers are compared to animals, it is in tribute to their beauty and undomesticated freedom. Both lovers have dovelike eyes, and both are associated with deer and gazelles. At moments they seem almost transformed into those graceful creatures...When the [Shulamite] asks [her beloved] to ‘be like a gazelle, a wild stag’ (2:17, 8:14), she is sweeping aside the biblical hierarchies, and we are reminded that animals were once venerated for their power and beauty. It is not by chance that the Shulamite asks her friends to swear ‘by the gazelles, by the deer of the field.’ In an oath, precisely where we might expect to find the name of God, we find instead the names of two animals that are frequently associated with the lovers.” See Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 9.

Pondering these noble claims, the author of Ecclesiastes concluded that they were extravagant delusions promising false hope. He conceded that humans indeed enjoy superiority over animals, but he left the superiority unspecified. He also explicitly repudiated grandiose comparisons of the human with the divine. Whatever the superiority of humans over animals might be, he declared that it was hollow and impermanent. Without intending to insult the beasts, he lumped mankind among them. Consider Chapter 3:18–21:

So I decided, as regards the children of Adam, to dissociate them [from] the divine beings (*elohim*), and to face the fact that they are beasts (*behemah*). For with respect to the fate of the children of Adam and the fate of beasts, they have one and the same fate: as the one dies so does the other, and both have the same life breath, so that mankind's superiority or advantage (*mutar*) amounts to nothing, for everything is vaporously futile. Everything goes to one and the same place, everything comes from the dust of the earth and returns to the dust of the earth.

For membership in the class of ancient people who recoiled from being compared with the divine but did not mind being compared with animals, who in fact seems to have relished the polemically heterodox comparison, I nominate the author of Ecclesiastes.

By the time Ecclesiastes and Genesis reached the Jewish Middle Ages, the artisans of interpretation had worked their hermeneutical magic. Superficially, nothing had changed. Biblical words remained constant. The same cannot be said for biblical meanings. They were modified by centuries of creative rabbinic commentary. Unlike the Bible, rabbinic tradition unequivocally differentiated humans from beasts in terms of *de'ah*, a Hebrew term for which there is no exact English equivalent but whose semantic range embraces personality, temperament, consciousness, awareness, and sensibilities (be they cognitive, affective, moral, or aesthetic): “[God] created man superior to the beasts, for man possesses sensibility (*de'ah*) and beasts do not possess sensibility (*de'ah*).”⁸ Another typical rabbinic tradition taught that humans constitute a distinct class of beings that displays a unique amalgam of modules or physiological and behavioral attributes characteristic of disparate domains:

Six things were said of human beings; in three they resemble the beasts and in three they resemble the ministering angels. Three like the beast: they eat and drink like the beast; they reproduce fruitfully and multiply like the beast; and they excrete bodily wastes like the beast. Three like the ministering angels: they possess discernment

⁸ *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* 37:1 (Version A). For the original Hebrew, see Solomon Schechter, ed., *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* (New York: Philip Feldheim, 1945), 109. For an annotated English translation, see Judah Goldin, trans., *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 152.

(*binah*) like the ministering angels; they walk upright like the ministering angels; and they converse in the holy language like the ministering angels.⁹

Were the rabbis to have articulated a scientific taxonomy on the basis of these modular resemblances, they would have refused to classify humans as the “rational animal” or any other sort of animal, just as they would have objected to the classification of humans as the “reproducing,” “excreting,” or any other sort of angel. Viewed within the hierarchic framework of rabbinic cosmology, beasts were strictly beasts, humans were strictly humans, and angels were strictly angels.

In turn, the biblical meanings and rabbinic commentaries were radically transformed by waves of catalytic interaction with Greek philosophy. From Philo to Spinoza, something akin to transubstantiation befell authoritative Jewish literature, and nowhere more dramatically than within the Genetic “image of God.”¹⁰

To medieval Jewish readers, except for kabbalists who taught the mystical doctrine of transmigration of human souls from and into the bodies of animals,¹¹ the “image of God” triggered an array of noble associations marking an impassible ontological boundary dividing humans from beasts. The medieval “image of God” was variously identified with a set of exclusively human capacities: speech, moral agency, freedom of the will to obey commandments, immortal soul emanating from and recapitulating the divine itself, practical mind able to perfect the arts and sciences, and theoretical intellect able to imitate God in abstract contemplation of the natural order.

⁹ *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* 37:1 (Version A). For bibliographic reference, see the immediately preceding note. For a critical discussion of this tradition and its several parallels in rabbinic literature, see Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 214–54. Urbach meticulously differentiates the rabbinic traditions from Philo’s Platonistic dualism. Urbach anchors his discussion in this version of the rabbinic opinion: “Man eats and drinks like a beast, he propagates like a beast, relieves himself like a beast, and dies like a beast...he stands erect like the Ministering Angels, he possesses understanding like the Ministering Angels, and sees like the Ministering Angels” [*Genesis Rabbah* 8:11]. More finely nuanced than Urbach’s discussion of rabbinic anthropology and mind-body dualism is Michael L. Satlow, “‘And on the Earth You Shall Sleep’: Talmud Torah and Rabbinic Asceticism,” *Journal of Religion* 83 (2003): 204–25.

¹⁰ For an overview of the transformations wrought by Philo and his premodern successors, see the still authoritative exposition of Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948) I:360–423. For an exemplary analysis of the transformation of rabbinic tradition in medieval Jewish thought, see Marc Saperstein, *Decoding the Rabbis: A Thirteenth-Century Commentary on the Aggadah* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

¹¹ See Gershom Scholem, “*Gilgul: The Transmigration of Souls*” in *On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts of the Kabbalah*, foreword by Joseph Dan (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), 197–250.

In medieval thought, the biblical emphasis on diet and dominion was combined with the rabbinic notion of *de'ah*. This combination of motifs was then inextricably linked with an elaborate philosophical system that partitioned all of reality into the disparate realms of body and mind. Cosmological dualism posited the categorical difference between material entities and spiritual substances, between three-dimensional physical objects extended in space and such mental activities as memory, imagination, prediction, thinking, choosing, dreaming, and hallucinating. Epistemological dualism complemented cosmological dualism by positing the superiority of spiritual revelation or abstract, scientific reasoning over all corporeal entities and all other forms of mentation. Epistemological dualism thereby asserted humanity's metaphysically sanctioned, exalted status over all other animals, no matter how emotionally responsive or rationally astute those animals might appear to be.¹²

As indicated by this venture in intellectual history, animal-human dualism oscillates between an innocuous taxonomy that merely stresses difference between entities and an aggressive taxonomy that valorizes difference as belligerent antagonism. The semantic oscillation between difference and antagonism, fueled by contested notions of hierarchy and privilege, seems to obtain in other forms of dualism, as well.

¹² For an overview of the premodern, Greek philosophic controversy concerning animal minds, see Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

Rodney S. Sadler, Jr.

Exegesis in Black and White

Dualism in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century
African American Biblical Hermeneutics

It is inevitable that a conversation on dualism will eventually have to address the topic of race. Any thorough discussion of the impact of dualism on the contemporary world must at some point address this system of human “othering,” particularly as it has been expressed in the United States. Race in America has reflected the essence of dualism. It is a system built on the fiction of polar opposites. As political scientist Andrew Hacker notes, “In the United States, what people mean by ‘race’ is usually straightforward and clear, given the principal divisions into black and white.”¹ Such dualistic opposition has been documented across the world through several millennia by Robert Hood in his work *Begrimed and Black*, where he notes the dualistic symbolic value of “blackness” versus “whiteness” as it has been “sacrilized” in Judeo-Christian tradition.² Race in this context consists of what are perceived as irreconcilably different types of humanity. As Henry Louis Gates declares in his introduction to *“Race,” Writing, and Difference*:

[Race is] a dangerous trope...a trope of ultimate, *irreducible* differences between cultures, linguistic groups, or adherents of specific belief systems which—more often than not—also have fundamentally opposed economic interests.³

Though Gates rejects the biological validity of race, he emphasizes the social potency of race as a concept that divides types of humanity “irreducibly.” Because of the potency of this particular dualism, I encourage additional work on the subject of dualism as it relates to race. I also suggest that another fruitful area of investigation would be W. E. B. DuBois’ concept of “double-consciousness” discussed in his text *The Souls of*

¹ Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 5.

² Robert E. Hood, *Begrimed and Black: Christian Traditions on Blacks and Blackness* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

³ Henry Louis Gates, “Editor’s Introduction: Writing ‘Race’ and the Difference it Makes,” in *“Race,” Writing, and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 5 (emphasis added).

Black Folk, where DuBois notes a racially fostered dualist opposition bifurcating the identity of individual African Americans. But the principal matter under consideration in this essay is the expression of dualism in the earliest book-length exegetical treatments of the Bible by African Americans. In these texts, hermeneutics has been influenced by a dualistic opposition of “racial” types; it appears that in these texts exegesis has become a matter of black and white.

Why is it that the early scholarship produced by African American exegetes frequently focused on issues of race? Is it that race was the only matter that had historically interested them? Or does it have something to do with the historical development of African American hermeneutics?

Evidence suggests that the first African Americans to develop book-length treatments of the biblical texts had already adopted a racialized view of Scripture. What I mean by “racialist” is a modified version of K. Anthony Appiah’s concept of “racialism.” Appiah defines racialism as a necessary but not sufficient condition for racism.⁴ It is the assumption that the synthetic system of racial divisions has a type of ontological validity. It is the assumption that races are real and that to ascribe race to someone is to say something meaningful about their identity (for example, that phenotype predicts behavior). It is the acceptance on some level that racial categories are not just descriptive, but prescriptive, defining the character of those circumscribed by racial identity. Hence, this essay will explore the way that racialist thought contributes to the attendant dualisms found in the work of early African American biblical exegetes.

That the concept of race originated in the Bible was axiomatic for these early African American scholars, as was the concept that racial divisions of humanity were valid predictors of human potential.⁵ Thus their work is replete with racialist language, authenticating the “dangerous” system of imposed human division that was the source of their collective woes.⁶

What we must realize is that the first African American biblical scholars were not writing in a vacuum or to satisfy an abstract sense of curiosity;

⁴ Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Racisms,” in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 3–17. See also “Race: An Interpretation,” in *Africana: The Encyclopedia of African and African American Experience*, ed. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Civitas Books, 1999), 1576.

⁵ On the invalidity of races as ontological categories for human beings see Thomas Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Faye V. Harrison, “Introduction: Expanding the Discourse on ‘Race,’” *American Anthropologist* 100 (1998): 609–631; Peter Rigby, *African Images: Racism and the End of Anthropology* (Oxford: Berg, 1996); Alan Templeton, “Human Races: A Genetic and Evolutionary Perspective,” *American Anthropologist* 100 (1998): 632–50.

⁶ See Ashley Montagu, *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945).

they were writing for a concrete purpose. They wrote as a necessary rejoinder to supremacist exegetes who had divided the world into two realms, black and white. Supremacists developed well-established biblically-based arguments that qualified, circumscribed, or negated the humanity of African Americans, emphasizing the radical and distinct “otherness” of their being from that of whites. For the sake of this paper, the clergyman Josiah Priest, who sought in 1843 to determine the origin of “the negro race,” will serve as an example of this type of supremacist scholarship. Though Priest is by no means the first supremacist exegetical ideologue, his work demonstrates many of the elements common to this genre.

Priest begins his analysis, as is common for writers of his ilk, with the anachronistic imposition of racialist ideology on the biblical texts. Beginning with Genesis 10, the “Table of Nations,” which Priest interpreted as a legitimate basis of the origin of racial divisions, and reading it through the lens of the “Curse of Canaan” (read Ham) in Genesis 9,⁷ Priest determined that the “blackness” of Africans could be traced back to Ham, their cursed progenitor.

According to Priest, Ham, made black contrary to the color of his parents by the “miraculous intervention of the Divine Power,”⁸ was aptly named. Ham meant “black.” This was not a neutral statement, since for Priest “black” meant not only phenotypically black, but “black in the literal sense...point[ing] out the very disposition of his mind.” Priest thus declared that the very name Ham implied that this son of Noah was

exceedingly prone to acts of ferocity and cruelty, involving murder, war, butcheries, and even cannibalism, including beastly lusts, and lasciviousness in its worst feature, going beyond the force of these passions, as possessed in common by the other races of men...the word signifies deceit, dishonesty, treachery, low mindedness, and malice. What a group of horrors are here, couched in the in the word Ham, all agreeing in a most surprising manner with the color of Ham’s skin, as well as with his real character as a man, during his own life, as well as with that of his race even now.⁹

Priest contrasts the blackness of Ham with Japheth:

[the] fair white man...the progenitor of a race who were to fill the world with their glory...for the white man, and the white woman are paramount in all the improvements of the earth.¹⁰

Priest goes on to deem the Canaanites, as sons of Ham, “black,” and to associate all blacks with their disfavored “cursed” position. He thus estab-

⁷ Josiah Priest, *Slavery as It Relates to the Negro, or African Race* (1843; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1977), 76–78.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

lished a biblically-based theologically-grounded hierarchy of humanity with “negroes” inextricably relegated to the lowest position.¹¹ Because of this type of argument employed to denigrate African peoples, the seeds of dualistic thought were already present in the racially polarized exegetical traditions that African Americans inherited. The ideological battlefield had already been divided between the opposite extremes of the human spectrum of color; exegesis had *already become* a matter of black and white.

Arguments such as Priest’s made it necessary for Robert Lewis and Rufus Perry, among the first African American biblical scholars, to develop their own systematic exegetical readings of the Bible. Such denigrating arguments also fostered ideological reactions like the esoteric work of Fleming Aytes. Living in a racialized American culture, these authors were forced to conceive of themselves as racialized beings, for society constantly reinforced the idea that race matters. Supremacist, Eurocentric biblical propagandists racialized Scripture, compelling early black scholars to employ competing racialist readings as an act of self-defense. In this context, it was imperative for these scholars to demonstrate that the God of Scripture, the ultimate ground of being in the Western world, was not *against* the racialized being of Diaspora Africans. African American exegetes countered the dehumanizing activity of the supremacist readings through their scholarship and appropriated the God of Scripture anew as a legitimate ground for the identity of black people.

These early scholars were pioneers in the true sense of the word, forced to forge new interpretive trails because they knew of no prior attempts to systematically use the Bible to voice the concerns of subjugated blacks. Without an established hermeneutic tradition of their own, these scholars subversively employed the theses of their ideological opponents to very different ends. In each of these instances, we see a pattern of partial acceptance of the racialist assumptions of their foes, then a definitive reversal of the implications of those initial assumptions. Through this process of reversal, early African American interpreters frequently arrived at ends antithetical to those of their supremacist antagonists. Their antithetical conclusions forged several dualisms between not only black and white, but between ideologically opposed conceptions of history.

We witness this pattern of subversive interpretation in the work of Robert Lewis. The earliest of these pioneers, Lewis wrote and copyrighted *Light and Truth: A Universal History of the Colored and Indian Race* in 1836, though it was not published until 1844. Lewis begins his analysis by accepting that the Bible presents accurate historical genealogical informa-

¹¹ Ibid., 63–88.

tion and strictly employing the Hamite hypothesis, assuming that all of the sons of Ham were “Ethiopian,” hence black in color and race.

Then using the same racist assumptions about the Bible popularized by Josiah Priest and others, Lewis reverses the implications of those assumptions and thereby undermines supremacist claims to the text. Employing what amounts to the “one drop” blackness rule popular during his period, Lewis examines the pedigree of countless biblical personalities and concludes that because they had at least one discernable African ancestor, most of the people in the Bible were black or at least “colored,” including Ham’s brothers Shem and Japheth.¹² Thus Lewis is able to re-appropriate the biblical text, making it palatable for oppressed African Americans. Having demonstrated that the biblical people were nearly all some variety of “colored,” he ends his work with a “scale comparison” for “colored” people in the United States:

Between Black and White is Mulatto. Between Mulatto and White is Quadroon. Between Quadroon and White is Mestizo.... We are all one, and oppressed in this land of boasted Liberty and Freedom. “But wo unto them by whom it cometh.”¹³

Demonstrating that key biblical figures had a “racial” composition like that of enslaved Africans and that these figures were indispensable to God’s plan of salvation, Lewis subtly condemns those who would use similar racial traits as a cause for oppression. As a result, Lewis’s work is antithetical to that of the supremacists who presume the normative whiteness of the majority of the biblical characters and condemn those few characters they identify as “blacks.” As Lewis sees it, biblical history (and history in general) is not the result of the activities of white peoples as the supremacists would suggest, but of colored or black peoples.

Significant also for understanding Lewis’s work is his perception of time. Though not explicitly stated, it is clear that Lewis perceives an essential temporal dualism. Much of his 400-page text chronicles a time when Africans were dominant figures in the history of humanity. This period of historical greatness is contrasted with the present wretched state in which Africans find themselves in the New World.¹⁴ Such temporal dualism can also be seen in his description of heroic African figures of old. For example, as he discusses Hanno, the general of Carthage, he notes that, “Some place his time about 140 years before the founding of Rome, which would be

¹² Robert B. Lewis, *Light and Truth; Collected from the Bible and Ancient and Modern History of the Colored and the Indian Race, from the Creation of the World to the Present Time*. (Boston: A Committee of Colored Gentlemen, 1844), 13–19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 400.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, iii.

about 800 years before the era of whites.”¹⁵ Thus for Lewis, the human calendar can be divided into successive periods of black and white dominance.

We can also discern a similar subversive interpretive strategy in the work of Rufus Perry. Perry, writing in 1893 and imagining himself to be the first scholar to ever take up this exegetical task, determined that “now the black man must write for black men, and give them proper or merited rank among the historic peoples of the earth.”¹⁶ He begins by addressing a pattern that had become pervasive in mainstream biblical scholarship:

[T]he most favored race of men [whites] preach about their own superiority till it becomes a kind of second nature. Then they piously incorporate it in their religion, and put it in their schoolbooks to be imbibed by their children...they have egregiously falsified the true history of the Cushites, or the Hamitic branch of the human family.¹⁷

Noting this, Perry states that his aim is to inspire

the thoughtful Negro to look back to his remote progenitors and trace up his lineage in the hope of finding something of ancestral greatness with which to...kindle in his breast a decent flame of pride of race.¹⁸

To accomplish this aim, Perry accepts the popularized view of the “Table of Nations” in Genesis 10, deeming it to be “the most ancient and reliable ethnographic table known to historians.”¹⁹ But Perry’s reversal comes in two distinct moves. First, in subsequent chapters of his book he uncovers evidence of the glorious past of black people by tracing narratives about the “sons of Ham” that “did not bend the knee to the Caucasian Baal” both in the Bible and from extra-biblical sources.²⁰ This “glorious past” is contrasted with the contemporary status of subjugated African peoples who are debased by the actions of their brothers, the Japhethites and Shemites “who unrighteously conspired against him.”²¹ Nobility is thus no longer a trait associated with whiteness, for “white” peoples are guilty of a collective crime against the noble race of Cushites (Africans). Hence, the nature

¹⁵ Ibid., 193. Consider also Lewis’s understanding of these African nations as the source of civilization, lending their wisdom to the Greeks. See *ibid.*, 18.

¹⁶ Rufus L. Perry, *The Cushite or the Descendants of Ham as Found in the Sacred Scriptures and in the Writings of Ancient Historians and Poets from Noah to the Christian Era* (Springfield, Mass.: Willey and Company, 1893), ix–x.

¹⁷ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 13.

²⁰ Ibid., 61.

²¹ Ibid., 162.

of the two types of people, black and white, is contrasted in Perry's hermeneutical system.

And second, instead of seeking to resolve the matter of the "Curse of Ham," Perry accepts it, determining that it is currently in effect. Like Priest, he determines that the "Curse of Ham" is the reason for the present degradation of African peoples, explaining the contrast between their present status and their glorious past.²² However, Perry is able to offer hope for modern Cushites in the prophesied moment when, as suggested in Ps 68:31, Cush will "stretch out her hands unto God."²³ Ps 68:31 was a key component of late nineteenth century Ethiopianist thought,²⁴ and with this Ethiopianist move Perry is able to configure the "Curse of Ham" as a temporary disadvantage destined to be reversed by God's providence at a near future moment. This rhetorical gesture also illustrates a temporal dualism inasmuch as time has again been bifurcated. The present moment is one of oppression for the Cushites, yet God will intervene to provide great blessing in the subsequent era when

the "Dark Continent" would soon stretch out her hands unto God, and robe herself in a garb more conformed to the Christianity of the New Testament than has hitherto clothed the character of any nation of Europe, Asia or America.²⁵

As Perry concludes, "God often brings good out of evil, and harmonizes his eternal purposes which neither men nor devils can thwart."²⁶

Perhaps the clearest example of this interpretive pattern can be found in Fleming Aytes' esoteric 1927 text, *The Teaching Black Jew*. Though difficult to follow due to the obscure hermeneutic methodology Aytes employs and its lack of systematic reasoning, this text accepts many more of the assumptions prevalent in mid-nineteenth century pro-slavery biblical interpretation than any other African American interpreters. Aytes' argument unfolds roughly as follows:

1. Because of a curse, Jews have dark skin and kinky hair and are thus blacks.²⁷
2. Blacks are Jews that have been scattered among the heathens, who are white and

²² Ibid., 80–85.

²³ Ibid., x.

²⁴ For background on the Ethiopianist Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries consider John Cullen Gruesser, *Black on Black: Twentieth-Century African-American Writing about Africa* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), or Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Wings of Ethiopia* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1990). Edward W. Blyden provides a contemporary's perspective of this movement in "Ethiopia Stretching out Her Hands unto God; or, Africa's Service to the World," in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race: Edward W. Blyden 1887* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), 25–45.

²⁵ Ibid., 170–71.

²⁶ Perry, *Cushite*, 164.

²⁷ Fleming Aytes, *The Teaching Black Jew* (New York: Fleming Aytes, 1927), 252–53.

who hold the blacks in bondage.²⁸ In fact, all Africans are really Jews.²⁹

3. The curse on Jews (read blacks) is evidenced by the brutality of racism in America perpetrated by the heathens (read whites).³⁰

4. The blackness of Jews is the original normal color of human beings.³¹

5. Whiteness is abnormal, resulting from a curse on Gehazi and the disease of leprosy (2 Kings 5).³²

By employing the concept of biblical curses and disparaging comments about African somatic types to his own ends, Aytes reverses the conclusions of supremacist biblical interpreters like Priest. The polar reversal of the dualistic racial paradigm is striking here as racial blackness becomes normative and whiteness is cast as an aberration both phenotypically and morally. “Whites” who were ontologically and morally superior in Priest’s work have thus become the savage heathen who are wrongly oppressing blacks. Also as Jews, blacks enjoy a favored position with God and through Jesus Christ are eligible for salvation, while whites are deemed “heathens” and out of favor with God unless they become Jews (read blacks).³³ In this text, it is evident that whiteness and blackness have evolved into oppositional categories with distinct moral characteristics, similar to the way they functioned in supremacist eisegesis like Priest’s. Further, the theological significance of blackness and whiteness has also been modified by Aytes to argue that blacks are favored by God and whites are under a divine curse.

The texts produced by these early African American interpreters demonstrate several important dualistic aspects. These aspects are the by-product of the politically driven exegetic traditions they appropriated and subversively reemployed from the supremacist traditions they sought to challenge. In fact, the very nature of their work makes such oppositions more likely, since critique and “counterpoint” are essential to their arguments. In this regard, it was necessary for the African American exegetes we have explored to present the opposing argument (thesis) and then provide their subversive reinterpretations (antithesis), thus reformulating a number of dualisms.

The racial divide in nineteenth and early twentieth century America forged a world of polar oppositions that was used by these early exegetes to re-imagine the social order and re-conceive of their own identity in more favorable ways. But their work went beyond their identity, suggesting that

²⁸ Ibid., 258–59.

²⁹ Ibid., 280.

³⁰ Ibid., 263–73.

³¹ Ibid., 303.

³² Ibid., 303–8.

³³ Ibid., 294–95.

aspects of the larger world were not as they appeared either. The identity of people in history had to be revisited as those made white by supremacist Eurocentric thought were now deemed “colored.” The negative traits ascribed to blacks were countered, and then ascribed fully to whites. Contrasts between blackness and whiteness in Aytes’ work are made starker by the understanding that the curses thought to have rested upon black peoples were hermeneutically reapplied to whites by his appeal to the cursing of Gehazi, interpreting this condemnation to have been more potent than the cursing of Canaan.

We can summarize these oppositional categories by noting several trends in early African American biblical hermeneutics:

1. Blackness and whiteness could be viewed as different types of being with attendant qualitative moral distinctions between the two groups. The opposition is contrary to that found by supremacists, since whiteness could be seen as a curse or the source of evil traits when contrasted with blackness, which as associated with historic nobility and inherent dignity.
2. “Normative whiteness” in biblical interpretation was deemed problematic and was contrasted with a vision of the biblical world dominated by African or colored peoples, and thus “normative blackness.”
3. Time could be viewed in terms of two or more contrasting eras. These eras were characterized by the racial types that predominate during the period. Hence, there was a former age of black/Cushite glory, followed by the “Christian” era, which found blacks subjugated by whites. Finally, there will be a new age, the advent of which will be marked by the restoration of Africans to their former glory. This will take place when African Americans reclaim their glorious past as they stretch out their hands in submission to the Lord.
4. The general acceptance-reversal paradigm demonstrates the fundamentally dualistic aspect of this exegetical tradition. Born of a desire to critique problematic interpretations of the Bible, early African American exegetes were forced to utilize the problematic theses of their ideological opponents to their own ends. Through the acceptance-reversal paradigm, these scholars constructed antitheses to the theses they appropriated, resulting in conclusions diametrically opposite to those produced by supremacist Eurocentric hermeneutics.

Most significantly for their political agendas, the work of these exegetes re-appropriated the God of Scripture, placing the deity squarely on the side of oppressed African Americans and Diaspora Africans and redeeming their identities. In this cosmic battle between black and white, these

African Americans were able to read Scripture in their own favor. Instead of a “race” of perpetual slaves destined to suffer the indignities of segregation and unequal status, these texts encouraged Diaspora Africans to reclaim the Bible as a ground of their human worth and to feel empowered to strive to once again appreciate their own human dignity.

A final contrast merits mention. The supremacists envisioned a “white”-dominated, segregated, hierarchical world divided neatly along inviolable racial lines. Yet the African American exegetes generally do not reverse this paradigm replacing whites with blacks as the principals in the human hierarchy. Instead, they favor a universalistic vision that recognizes all peoples’ contributions to society and seeks to provide every “racial” group the opportunity to participate fully in the social order. Despite the indignities that they endured, their end was a world of parity and universal equality, which differs starkly from the supremacists’ exclusivist ethnocentric ideal.

After examining the texts produced by these pioneers, we are in a position to draw some conclusions about their scholarship. Though their methodologies vary, the common thread running through each of their works is their determination to locate the means for African American liberation in the pages of Scripture. Further, most also:

1. Perceive biblical peoples to be direct ancestors of oppressed Diaspora Africans;
2. See in the biblical narrative a glorious past that should inspire “racial” pride;
3. Focus on black people’s need to know the history of Africans in the Bible in order to resolve contemporary concerns about race. Properly understanding this hidden history is an important component of liberating and attaining a glorious future for African Americans;
4. Demonstrate reverence for the biblical text; and
5. End with a universalistic move affirming the siblinghood of all humanity.

Yet there are also major limitations to this exegetical stream:

1. These scholars uncritically accepted the historicity of Scripture without carefully establishing its historical merit or acknowledging its theological and political aims;
2. They assumed the scientific genealogical validity of the “Table of Nations” without appealing to extra-biblical materials or archaeological data to verify their racist assumptions;
3. They presumed *a priori* both that races are valid as legitimate ontological categories of humanity and that the Bible authorized racial divisions. In this regard and to their own detriment, they unwittingly

perpetuated the same system that their supremacist opponents used to oppress them;

4. They failed to delineate what they intended when using contested racialist terms like “Ethiopian,” “black,” “colored,” “mulatto,” and “negro,” and they use these terms inconsistently throughout their analyses;
5. They valorized such exegetically untenable theories as the “Curse of Ham” without noting the problematic nature of the biblical text. Further, their works were predicated on dated and often less than rigorous exegetical analysis; and
6. They were often guided by ideologies that no longer hold sway among African Americans biblical exegetes, such as Ethiopianism.

Yaakov Ariel

“You Must Choose! The Prince of Peace or the Prince of Darkness”

Evangelical Beliefs and American Dualism at the Turn
of the Twenty-First Century

The Terminator, one of the more popular American movies of the 1980s, describes a messenger sent to 1980s Los Angeles by “the faithful remnant,” humans of a future time. The mission of the messenger is to protect Sarah Connor, the mother of the future savior, John Connor, from another emissary from the future, this time a messenger of destruction, the terminator, sent by the diabolic rulers of the future to kill her before she gives birth to the savior. In attempting to persuade Sarah Connor to trust him and place her life in his hand, the messenger of protection exclaims, “There are only the two of us. It is now either him or me.”

Fifteen years later, in the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001, George W. Bush, then president of the United States, repeated the same choice, telling the nations of the world “you are either for us or against us.”¹ Such words by the scriptwriters for *The Terminator*, as well as the speechwriters for the president of the United States, point to the strong influence of a dualistic and messianic, Christian evangelical, worldview on American popular culture, as well as on the American national public discourse. By the turn of the twenty-first century, evangelical Christian dualism has become mainstream American thinking, representing and shaping the American mind.

Evangelical Theology and Dualism

Conservative evangelicalism is not a unified or uniform movement, but rather a huge, variegated religious and cultural camp within American society. Evangelicals differ over denominational loyalties, liturgical traditions, and, at times, theological details (such as predestination versus free will). Yet conservative evangelicals of all groups and backgrounds share a number of key theological premises and, for the most part, similar cultural

¹ On *The Terminator*, its production, and public reaction, see <<http://heim.ifi.uio.no/~haakonhi/term-inator/index.cgi>>.

characteristics.² Derived from the most fundamental evangelical theological creeds, including the evangelical definition of Christianity and of how to become a Christian, the evangelical dualistic worldview stands at the center of evangelical thinking. Dualism meshes with the evangelical philosophy of history and critique of culture, as well as the evangelical perception of social order and understanding of how individuals and societies can reform themselves.

According to this conservative evangelical understanding, there are two sources of power competing for human loyalty, one evil and destructive, identified with Satan, and the other good and redemptive, personified by the Savior. Satan's power has not been quite equal to that of God, as Satan was not instrumental in the creation and came into the world at a later stage.³ Satan's weaker standing in the universe also becomes clear by his predestined defeat. Ultimately Satan is bound to be crushed by Jesus, the prince of righteousness. But while weaker than God and scheduled to be subdued, Satan is nonetheless very dangerous. Currently, Satan has autonomous power and is successfully active on planet Earth, and his potential for destruction is enormous.⁴ In fact, Satan seems to be triumphant in our time, and during the apocalyptic times that precede the arrival of Jesus and his saints to Earth he will actually rule the planet and its inhabitants for a number of years.⁵

Evangelical Christian theology emphasizes that only men and women who undergo a spiritual metamorphosis and embrace Jesus as their Savior can be reformed and become righteous persons. They, alone, have distanced themselves from Satan and his influence, assured their salvation, and secured for themselves eternal life.⁶ The evangelical definition of Christians is those persons who have been "born again in Christ" and have accepted Jesus as their Savior. The Christian Church does not equal a specific Christian denomination, but rather "the body of the true believers," consisting of all those persons who have established a relationship with Jesus as their Savior. In evangelical understanding, humanity is divided into sharply distinct categories: the true followers of Christ, and those who have ignored or rejected him. Such a view denies any real merits in theological, philosophi-

² On the conservative evangelical camp, its divisions, and characteristics, see Robert D. Woodberry and Christian S. Smith *et al.*, "Fundamentalist Protestants in America," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 25–56.

³ On Satan's limited power, see Billy Graham, *The Jesus Generation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971), chap. 13, "The Devil is Alive and Kicking."

⁴ For example, Hal Lindsey, *Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth* (Irvine, Cal.: Harvest House Publishers, 1973).

⁵ Hal Lindsey, *There is a New World Coming: A Vision of Where Mankind is Heading* (Irvine, Cal.: Harvest House Publishers, 1973).

⁶ Billy Graham, *How to be Born Again* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984).

cal, or cultural systems other than Christianity in its evangelical interpretation. Non-Christian religious groups and philosophical movements, no matter their intentions, lead their followers astray and, ultimately, to destruction. Evangelism is therefore the only appropriate manner for Christians to relate to non-Christians. As the lucky ones who have found the path to salvation, true Christians have a duty to show humanity the way to redemption and spread the true Gospel.

Dualism and evangelism go hand in hand. This dualistic worldview serves as the *raison d'être* for evangelism. "We" know what the path to salvation is, and we know that "others" do not possess it. For evangelicals, an attitude of "you have your faith, I have my faith" will not do. "Your faith," the faith of the "other," is deluded, if not demonic, and will lead its followers to eternal damnation. The correct message is therefore, "You are a sinner, alienated from God. If you want to be saved, you must repent and distance yourself from Satan. You must choose Jesus, and with Him, goodness and eternity."⁷

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there has been a shift in the evangelical theological understanding of salvation, away from electionism into a more democratic understanding of salvation.⁸ Evangelicals have understood salvation more and more as a matter of choice. The road to salvation, they have come to believe, involves an affirmative decision on the part of individuals to embrace good and reject evil, a decision that correlates with the decision to embrace Jesus and build a personal relationship with him. Many evangelicals believe that many more people can be saved if they only come to know and understand the Christian message in its evangelical interpretation, the belief that Jesus' death on the cross offered forgiveness and eternal life to all "true believers," those who have recognized Jesus as their personal savior. The evangelical messianic faith offers evangelism an additional sense of mission. The evangelical message is: "Repent now, before it is too late." For evangelical missionaries, this urgency provides an additional incentive and sense of mission, translated into, "Let's spread the Gospel now, while people still have an opportunity to repent."⁹ Such evangelicals are working not merely to bring Christianity to the unchurched, but to turn sinners into saints and to serve as soldiers in the cosmic battle between good and evil.

⁷ Pat Robertson, *Answers to 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), especially 75–94.

⁸ For example, Scott M. Gibson, A. J. Gordon: *A Premillennialist Life* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2002).

⁹ William R. Hutchison, *Errand Into the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Evangelicals and Other Faiths

Conservative evangelical Christians have refused to join the ecumenical movement and movements of interfaith dialogue that developed at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁰ Indeed, the rise of such trends within American Christianity stirred angry reactions among conservative evangelicals and served as one of the incentives for the rise of a “fundamentalist” Christian camp in America at the turn of the twentieth century. Conservative evangelicals have insisted that Christianity is not one religion among the many.¹¹ In their eyes, it is the only religion that holds the true message of God to humanity and the only one offering a valid path to salvation and eternal life. This does not imply that evangelical Christians have not cooperated with members of other religious groups over civic or political issues, but such alliances have, for the most part, been on a pragmatic basis. Evangelical appreciation for other faiths is limited, and as a rule evangelicals do not believe that other religious traditions have any intrinsic value. At times, evangelicals perceive such groups to be dangerous, leading astray men and women who otherwise could be persuaded to accept Jesus as their savior.

Evangelical Christians, for example, take exception to new religious movements that energetically recruit young men and women in America and elsewhere.¹² Evangelical activists have been founders and leaders of the anti-cult movement that emerged in the 1970s and have called for combating the new religious groups as dangerous to society and its youth (including through putting legal restrictions on their activities).

Negative evangelical attitudes have not been restricted to religious groups that have begun their activities in recent decades. Evangelicals have often been less than appreciative towards the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, to which many of them have related as a “cult.”¹³ In 1999, the Mormon church opened the doors of a new temple in Apex, North Carolina, to the general public, before it was officially consecrated. A number of evangelical activists stood at the entrance and exit of the compound, distributing leaflets and brochures warning visitors that the temple was non-Christian. Similarly, when the Winter Olympics took place in Salt Lake City in 2002, evangelical groups made a point of convening in the city during that time, evangelizing vigorously and distributing material to visi-

¹⁰ George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

¹¹ Arno C. Gaebelein, *Christianity or Religion?* (New York: Our Hope, 1927).

¹² Cf. for example, William J. Peterson, *Those Curious New Cults in the 80s* (New Canaan, Ct.: Keats Publishing, 1982); and Edmund C. Gruss, *Cults and the Occult*, 4th ed. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2001).

¹³ For example, Gruss, *Cults and the Occult*, 17–25.

tors there. While only a minority of evangelicals resort to uncivil denunciations of other citizens' faiths, the distributors of the pamphlets represented dominant evangelical sentiments, according to which Mormons are not really Christian. This does not mean that evangelicals and Mormons have not cooperated on political and civic issues. In fact, evangelicals have found in the Mormons political allies who share much of the evangelical vision of the desired social, economic, and cultural premises according to which the American commonwealth should be governed. As a rule, both groups promote conservative social, economic, and cultural views, and both are ardent American patriots.

While George W. Bush, in his post September 11 speech in Congress, asserted that Islam was a "good faith," a number of prominent evangelical leaders have openly disagreed. Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, both ardent supporters of Bush, were among those who took exception to the president's claim, blaming Islam for the murderous activities of its faithful.¹⁴ Evangelical writers had denounced Islam even before the attacks of September 11. Among the complaints of evangelicals against Islam, evangelical writers have listed Islam's dominance of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which many evangelicals see as an obstacle to the rebuilding of the Temple and the advancement of the messianic timetable, as well as an audacity on the part of a misleading faith. For eschatologically oriented evangelicals, Moslem claims to dominance of the Holy Land have meshed well with their view of Islam as a disruptive community that is sabotaging Christian interests.¹⁵ In the past decades, on the other hand, there has been a decline in evangelical attacks on Roman Catholicism. In recent years only hardline evangelicals such as Jimmy Swaggert have openly attacked Roman Catholicism, identifying it as a non-Christian religion.¹⁶

For the most part, twenty-first century evangelicals do not openly divide good or bad people according to racial or ethnic affiliations. Such notions have not been unknown in America, but in the last decades have gone out of fashion, becoming "politically incorrect." Open pronouncements of dualistic ideas based on racial divides usually place religious groups outside the mainstream of American Christianity. A good example of the change in

¹⁴ Michael E. Naparstek, "Falwell and Robertson Stumble," *Religion in the News* 4(3) (Fall 2001): 5, 27. See also, Laurie Goodstein, "Seeing Islam as 'Evil' Faith, Evangelicals Seek Converts," *New York Times* (27 May 2003), 1.

¹⁵ For example, Don Steward and Chuck Missler, *The Coming Temple: Center State for the Final Countdown* (Orange, Cal.: Dart Press, 1991); Jan Willem van der Hoeven, *Babylon or Jerusalem?* (Shippensburg, Penn.: Destiny Image, 1993); and Elishua Davidson, *Islam, Israel and the Last Days*, (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1991).

¹⁶ Jimmy Swaggert, *Catholicism and Christianity* (Baton Rouge, La.: Jimmy Swaggert mini-series, 1986).

attitude that has occurred among evangelical leaders is the apology Billy Graham issued in 2002 following the release of transcripts of a conversation he had with Richard Nixon in 1972, in which he blamed the Jews for the rise of evil liberal trends in American society.¹⁷ Instead, evangelical Christians have increasingly adopted a “color-blind” attitude. Personal conversion, which results in reform, self-improvement, and constructive behavior, is all that people of all races or ethnic groups need. Evangelicals recognize members of all races and colors as holding merit when such people share the proper faith and cultural norms. They see no reason to differentiate in any way between brothers and sisters in Christ. At the same time, white evangelicals also see no reason to encourage, let alone compensate, disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups.

Yet evangelical leaders do not hesitate to point fingers at groups that in their eyes deviate culturally from their norms, such as “liberals,” “secular humanists,” or “gays.” Following the attacks of September 11, a number of evangelists blamed homosexuality, as well as other cultural “vices” the nation had tolerated, for bringing about God’s wrath embodied in the attacks.

Similarly, a number of evangelical preachers and writers have referred to the AIDS epidemic as resulting from a moral failure and refusal to walk in the path of the righteous. “Sinful behavior by homosexuals is a major factor in the spread of this deadly plague,” writes Franklin Graham, one of America’s leading evangelists at the turn of the twenty-first century.¹⁸ “There are consequences to our actions and we have to take responsibility for the choices we make in life.”¹⁹ AIDS is thus a punishment for “sex experienced outside the boundaries God established.”²⁰

Dualism and Social Thought

Evangelical Christians have consistently denied the ability of humanity, through reason, education, technology, or any other means, to reform itself, solve its problems, and build a better world. Adopting a messianic, premillennialist faith, as their philosophy of history, evangelicals have argued that only the Messiah can bring remedy to society. Satan will continue to lure individuals astray and will go from strength to strength, a reality that will change only when the Messiah returns. Evangelical conservative social and cultural outlooks have amalgamated with an eschato-

¹⁷ David Firestone, “More Criticism and Another Apology for Billy Graham’s 1972 Remarks,” *New York Times* (17 March 2002), 24.

¹⁸ Franklin Graham, *The Name* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 171.

¹⁹ Franklin Graham, *The Name*, 171.

²⁰ Franklin Graham, *The Name*, 171.

logically oriented theology to create a distinctly conservative evangelical worldview.

Matters were very different in the first half of the nineteenth century. Evangelical activists had stood, at that early time, in the forefront of social reform.²¹ British evangelical Christians successfully fought the international slave trade, while northern American evangelicals became active abolitionists in the mid-nineteenth century. Similarly, evangelical activists both in Britain and America pioneered in urban welfare.²²

In the late nineteenth century, in reaction to a number of social and cultural changes including the rise of a liberal Protestant “modernist” camp, evangelical social thinking became increasingly conservative. Reacting to the liberal outlooks of Protestant “modernists” who, in the evangelical view, betrayed basic Christian claims, evangelical Christians have promoted conservative social, economic, and political views. Denying the ability of human society to build a better community, they have acted with suspicion towards attempts at social reform and movements advocating progressive social agendas. Evangelicals have often seen in such programs a manifestation of a worldview hostile to Christianity and favorable to Satan. Evangelical thinkers have argued that progressive agendas offer humanity the false, pretentious assumption that human beings can reform themselves without God’s help. By the turn of the twenty-first century, many evangelicals adopted a “Gospel of Success,” responding to social and economic issues with the firm belief that true Christian believers, by virtue of their choice to reject Satan and join Christ and His Kingdom, are moral, constructive, hardworking, law-abiding, and therefore successful citizens.²³ Poverty, unemployment, corruption, and crime are symptoms of moral failure on the part of unreformed individuals, a triumph of Satan. Such destructiveness can be effectively cured if all people establish personal relationships with Jesus. This view has meshed well with the well-rooted American ethos that America offers every decent, hardworking citizen the opportunity for economic security and personal happiness.²⁴

²¹ See Hilton Boyd, *The Age of Atonement* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988); and Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (New York: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965).

²² See Yaakov Ariel, “From Progress to Reaction: The Development in American Evangelical Attitudes on Social and Economic Issues, 1825–1925,” in *Religion and Economy*, ed. Menahem Ben-Sasson (Jerusalem: Zohman Shazar, 1995), 401–17.

²³ Cf. Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), especially 227–35.

²⁴ Cf. Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001). For an example of evangelical social and political conservatism, see, for example, Pat Robertson, *Shout It from the Housetops* (South Plainfield, N.J.: Bridge Publishing, 1972), which can be read as a conservative social manifesto.

Evangelicals expect all true Christians to be hardworking, law-abiding individuals. In evangelical understanding, there is no room for ambiguity. Human beings are not complex, neurotic beings, a mixture of strong and weak qualities. Nor are they characterized by good intentions hampered by bad decisions. Humans are not a mixture of good and bad; they are either good or bad. And each and every human being can become moral only by establishing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Those who have adopted Jesus as their Savior are thus removed from dark temptations, from Satan and his devastating influence. By definition, they act morally on all fronts: obey the laws, show impeccable loyalty to their country, are good spouses, parents, and neighbors, as well as employers or employees. They would not cheat on their wives or lie to their colleagues. They would shun all “illicit” sex and abhor pornography. Whether or not all evangelicals truly fulfill such expectations and live such exemplary—if not saintly—lives, the highly moralistic norms set by evangelicals for good citizenship have affected all spheres of American life, including politics and law.²⁵

While many laws in America are universal and relate to such globally acclaimed dictums as “thou shalt not kill” or “thou shalt not steal,” many other laws are, at this time, almost uniquely American. At the turn of the twenty-first century, for example, the United States is one of the very few Western countries (Nevada notwithstanding) to outlaw prostitution and almost the only country on Earth to prosecute citizens who patronize such services. The United States is the only country, with the exception of Moslem nations, that has outlawed alcoholic beverages altogether, outlawed “public drinking,” or forbidden students and soldiers under the age of 21 to buy and drink alcohol. The sentencing of crimes that are universal in nature is also very different than in other countries. America is the only developed Western country to reinstate the death penalty, and the only one to sentence criminals to life in prison without parole. Such sentences are reserved not merely for murderers or rapists, but for a whole list of crimes, including, at times, non-violent ones. No other nation has yet invented the Three Strike Law, according to which all persons who have committed three felonies—no matter what they are—spend their entire remaining lives in prison. The American prison population has soared accordingly, becoming the largest prison population on Earth (both in relative terms and absolute numbers) since the dissolution of the Soviet Stalinist Gulags.

Such developments reflect the impact of conservative dualistic morality on the American attitude towards crime and criminals. Granted, there are other factors that have contributed to the growth of the twenty-first century

²⁵ James A. Morone, *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 450–92.

American prison system.²⁶ Observers have noted, for example, that the American law enforcement establishment has a vested interest in keeping a growing number of citizens locked up or supervised. In many parts of the nation prisons are major employers. The majority of prisoners have been convicted for abuse of drugs or parole violations, a clear indication that the American prison system is a self-perpetuating giant that “swallows” as many members of the underclasses as it can. Others maintain that legalizing drugs would cause the prison balloon to lose its hydrogen and shrink. Even still, the current system would not have grown to its current size without the dualistic understanding of human nature on which it feeds, just as Joseph Stalin’s gulags received their *raison d’être* from a dualistic worldview that called for the isolation, if not annihilation, of “unreformed saboteurs.”

Crime in America, one cannot avoid noticing, is not seen as a reflection of social malaise, or as the resort of the disadvantaged to anti-social behavior, or as the alienation of the underprivileged from the values and norms of the ruling classes of society. Nor is crime understood as a rebellion of the dispossessed and rootless against a social system that disregards their plight. Instead, it is viewed as a reflection of moral failure on the part of the individuals accused of the crimes, persons who have let themselves be conquered by evil. Such attitudes reflect a dualistic perception of human nature and the understanding that true Christians are moral beings who do not commit crimes. Humans are divided into two categories: perfect citizens who abide by the rules, and failing individuals who harm society and put it in danger. Such persons should be removed from society, preferably for good. “Zero tolerance” has become a popular tool of American social engineering at the turn of the twenty-first century, based on the notion that society should not give offenders a second chance before sending them away; the first crime fully indicates who they are. Likewise, those coming out of prison after serving time for their crimes are denied, in many states of the Union, citizens’ rights and are forbidden to vote. Citizenship is reserved for the righteous. Those who have let evil lead them astray should not be part of the American civic society and should have no say in how it is run.

The evangelical understanding of crime as a moral failure reflecting evil intentions and unreformed personalities is demonstrated in American popular culture. American movies, television series, cartoons, and popular literature depict two types of human beings: “bad guys” and “good guys.” The evil nature of the bad guys finds its expression in uncontrollable greed or lust. In American drama, such roundly evil beings, the open or disguised criminals among us, are ultimately exposed, and then arrested, if not annih-

²⁶ Cf. Lawrence M. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment in American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 358–466.

lated, by the “good guys”—citizens who dedicate their lives to fighting evil. In such ways, on a daily basis American entertainment reenacts and reinforces the story of the struggle between the children of light and the children of darkness. This dualistic understanding of human nature is dramatically emphasized in American entertainment. It is not only that humans are either good or bad; they are either profoundly good or totally bad. Throughout the drama, evil has temporary victories, but good eventually triumphs, just as Satan’s success on planet Earth is temporary. Eventually the forces of righteousness will crush Satan’s lieutenants. The evangelical messianic drama is reenacted on a small scale again and again. The “bad guys” cause destruction and pain, but at the end of the day they never win. Being totally evil and destructive, the bad guys are fair game for the children of light, law enforcement agents, or righteous private citizens. Their lives, to say nothing of their freedom and dignity, have no value. They can be shot with ease, totally destroyed, fully humiliated, while the good guys emerge triumphant and joyful. American popular culture thus strengthens dualistic notions and helps reinforce their role in the American mind.

Evangelical Dualism and America’s World Mission

While many evangelicals were less than happy with the cultural trends in America through the twentieth century, they did not resort to viewing the United States as diabolic and did not, as a movement, become socially, politically, or culturally separatist. On the contrary, for the most part evangelicals have amalgamated their dualistic eschatological understanding of human nature with loyalty to the United States and its ideals, finding a role and a purpose for America in their vision of the course of human history and of the expected apocalypse. Consequently, conservative evangelicals have become, alongside Mormons, the American patriots *par excellence*. According to evangelical understanding, American society and culture leave much to be desired, and Satan is having a feast in the land. Immorality, pornography, promiscuity, and abortion—not to mention the triumph of alien and distorting faiths—are the evidence that points to that conclusion. But despite these deep flaws, America is morally superior to all other nations and is not as badly infected by the kind of inherent, hopeless corruption that characterizes other societies. Furthermore, America has a mission—to help prepare the ground for the return of the Lord. Among other things, the United States is commanded to safeguard the return of the Jews to Zion, a key prerequisite, according to the evangelical eschatological faith, for the return of the Messiah.²⁷

²⁷ Cf. Yaakov Ariel, *On Behalf of Israel: American Fundamentalist Attitudes Towards Jews, Judaism, and Zionism, 1865–1945* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991), 92–93.

This evangelical perception of America as the righteous among the nations and as responsible for leading the people of the world into the next stage in human history has strongly affected the evangelical vision for America's international policies. The evangelical dualistic worldview has influenced American foreign policy, as it contributed to the American understanding of itself as a righteous world power, fighting satanic rules or governments, "evil empires," and "axes of evil." In this regard, too, the evangelical worldview has meshed well with a more general American self-understanding as a nation with a "manifest destiny." The evangelicals are in this realm rightful heirs of the New England Puritans and the Puritan vision of the commonwealth they were building as a "city built upon a hill." Such notions have affected the American ethos and have translated into the self-understanding that the United States of America is a chosen, superior nation that carries a special mission in history and plays a special role in God's plans for human salvation.²⁸

Such messianic notions have enhanced a dualistic understanding of America's international agenda and influenced the attitudes of the American public towards developments in the international arena. For many Americans, for example, the Soviet Union was not merely a country that clashed with the United States over its ambitions for world hegemony or over specific policies that did not go hand in hand with the interests of the United States. The Soviet Union was an evil empire, run by a satanic government that enslaved its people and wished to do the same to the entire world, thus bringing about further destruction of Christian values and institutions. Many Americans evangelicals considered communism and socialism evils even before the Bolshevik revolution transformed the regime in Russia. With the birth of the Soviet Union in 1917, evangelical writers did not hesitate to identify the leading communist state with the evil "Northern Empire" that according to biblical prophecy was destined to invade the Land of Israel and take part in the final global battle of Armageddon. Ronald Reagan's calling the Soviet Union an "evil empire," thus echoing John's *Revelation*, epitomized the American conservative evangelical understanding of the Soviet Union throughout 1917–1989.²⁹

Likewise, evangelicals related to international organizations such as the League of Nations or the United Nations through the lens of their premillennialist eschatological faith. Evangelical eschatological tracts and popular literature point to such international organizations as potentially despotic

²⁸ Cf. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1937).

²⁹ Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1970), chap. 5: "Russia is Gog"; and Grant R. Jeffrey, *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), 98–107.

international governments. The United Nations is perceived in contemporary evangelical novels and dramas as the vehicle through which the Antichrist will launch his despotic kingdom.³⁰ The United Nations will turn, in the wake of the Rapture and the confusion and fear that will accompany the disappearance of tens of millions of born-again Christians from Earth, into an effective world administration and ultimately a vehicle for the forces of darkness to rule the earth. Such a scenario serves as the backbone of the plot in the *Left Behind* novels, a series of national bestsellers at the turn of the twenty-first century. The smooth but treacherous secretary general of the United Nations, Nicolae Carpathia, uses his position to become a global tyrant.³¹

Conservative evangelicals have also been suspicious towards the European Union. Eschatologically oriented evangelicals have expected the rise of a major new European Empire.³² In their view, such a commonwealth would play the role of the “Western Empire,” a tyrannical European reincarnation of the Roman Empire that, like the Northern Empire, would invade Israel and take part in the final battle in Armageddon. The move in Europe towards a common market and then the rise of the European Union has seemed to many evangelicals to be in line with the scenarios predicted by their eschatological biblical interpretation. Many evangelicals have been certain that the unification of Europe ultimately serves a negative cause.

Evangelical dualistic ideology has had an enormous influence on American thinking, public opinion, and policies. George W. Bush, the second president since World War II to identify himself as a born-again Christian and the only one to represent fully a conservative, evangelical worldview, is reported to have read as a daily devotional exercise sermons that a minister in the British army preached to soldiers in Egypt and the Sinai before they invaded Palestine in 1917.³³ Bush’s way of thinking and rhetoric were unmistakably evangelical and dualistic. But it is not only in the international arena that this dualistic evangelicalism has had a strong impact.

Evangelical Dualism and American Culture

Evangelical dualistic thinking has extended its influence far beyond the evangelical community. It has come to influence American culture as a

³⁰ See, for example, the description of the United Nations in Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Left Behind: A Novel of the Earth's Last Days* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1995).

³¹ Additional book in the series, besides *Left Behind*, include: *Tribulation Force* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1996); *Nicolae: The Rise of Antichrist* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1997); *Soul Harvest* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1999); *Apollyon* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1999); *Assassins* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1999); *The Indwelling* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2000); and *The Mark* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2000).

³² For example, Jeffrey, *Armageddon*, 140–50.

³³ Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Urichsville, Oh.: Barbour, n.d.).

whole. Meshing with the American national ethos, the evangelical dualistic worldview plays a dominant role in shaping contemporary American thinking. Following the resurgence of evangelical Christianity in the 1950s–1970s, the influence of evangelical thinking in the 1980s–2000s can be measured by the success and popularity of novels, plays, movies, and television series that do not wear an evangelical dualistic badge openly but nonetheless represent evangelical dualistic and eschatological thinking. One can claim that even non-evangelical Americans—including groups and movements that reject the evangelical faith—have been influenced, often unwittingly, by evangelical dualistic notions. One good example is the wildly acclaimed film *The Terminator*. The scriptwriters, directors, and actors (including the celebrity Arnold Schwarzenegger) did not come to promote the evangelical faith or an evangelical agenda. Likewise, tens of millions of viewers have not seen this film as evangelical. Yet films such as *The Terminator* can be seen as secularized versions of the evangelical dualistic and eschatological faith. They give expression to contemporary anxieties, reflecting fear of the possible dangers of technology. Nonetheless, the creators and producers of such films have internalized Christian evangelical premillennialist and dualistic thinking and adopted it as their own, even if unwittingly, in presenting the vulnerability of ordinary humans in the face of a computerized and highly technologized world.

An amazing testimony to the influence of evangelical thinking on the American mind was the way in which Americans reacted to the coming of a new millennium. The anticipation that preceded the year 2000 pointed to the strong attachment between the evangelical messianic hope and the general American culture. Evangelical hopes for the beginning of the End Times at the turn of the millennium were strongly enhanced by the fascination of the general public with the year 2000 and the changes and catastrophes that evangelicals and non-evangelicals alike feared that the year 2000 might bring.³⁴ In 1998 and 1999, for example, Y2K became a focal point of widespread apocalyptic frenzy, as many experienced strong fears of serious disruptions to everyday life, if not a complete breakdown of all technological systems, just at the turn of the new millennium. Evangelicals pointed to the potential catastrophe as one of the predicted features of the End Times.³⁵ The longtime evangelical millennial hope had, in this case, be-

³⁴ Douglas E. Cowan, "Confronting the Failed Failure: Y2K and Evangelical Eschatology in Light of the Passed Millennium," *Nova Religio* 7(2) (2003), 71–85.

³⁵ In TV programs such as that of Jack Van Impe and in books such as Grant R. Jeffrey, *The Millennium Meltdown: The Year 2000 Computer Crisis* (Toronto: Frontier Research Publications, 1998), Steve Farrac, *Spiritual Survival During the Y2K Crisis* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson,

come coupled with popular American culture, one feeding upon the other. The excitement and fear in the general society validated the evangelical premillennialist faith and encouraged its proponents, while many non-evangelicals gave a second look at evangelical terminology and faith, wondering if the apocalypse might not arrive after all.

Reversing the Gaze

The influence of evangelical thinking on American culture can be demonstrated by its impact on groups that, at least in theory, oppose evangelical values and morality. Amazingly, such groups often adopt dualistic attitudes similar to those promoted by evangelical Christians. One example is provided by a gay Wiccan writer, who reversed the gaze and returned the evangelical complaints. Adopting a dualistic worldview comparable to that of evangelical Christians, Perry Bran's version of cosmic events in his novel *Angel Lost* is that it is Christians who are soldiers of Satan, enemies of righteousness, and persecutors of the innocent.³⁶ The rise of Satan to dominance on planet Earth and his continuing reign of terror began, according to this alternative narrative, when Christianity took over and crushed heathen cultures. Concentrating on the English-speaking world, the novel sees the destruction of a humane and tolerant world with the Christianization of Britain. It describes pre-Christian England as an idyllic, pastoral place where humans lived in peace with each other and in harmony with nature. Their religious ceremonies in the forest were mild bacchanalial celebrations, where drinking and sexual encounters meshed with a spirit of brotherly love and respect for the environment.

Christian rulers destroyed this utopian way of life, exploiting the land and its people, terrorizing the population, and pursuing with particular vengeance those who challenged and disobeyed the new order and its rules. In Bran's novel, free love (including gay and lesbian encounters) symbolizes an attempt to recapture the innocent spirit that has become delegitimized and has gone underground since Christianity took hold of England. According to the narrative, life takes place on two levels. The superficial level of Christian propriety is misleading. Under the surface, a very different reality persists. The ruling classes of society are morally hypocritical, clandestinely breaking their own rules. Motivated by greed and fear of exposure and banishment from power, they utilize a mechanism of masquerade and deceit, tools appropriate to the agents of the demonic realm. In this novel, those who in evangelical eyes are perverts are actually the righteous, while

1999); and Mike Hyatt and George Grant, *Y2K: The Day The World Shut Down* (Nashville, Tenn.: World Publishing, 1998).

³⁶ Perry Bran, *Angel Lost: A Novel of Time Travel* (Riverdale, N.Y.: Belhue Press, 2000).

the moralistic establishment, marching under the banner of the Christian faith, constitutes the villains, instruments of an ongoing assault of the powers of evil against the Children of Light.

The remarkable element about the novel is that it advocates a gay-Wiccan point of view not on the basis of a quest for equality with Christian norms of behavior, but, instead, makes a claim to the superiority of a self-consciously gay, Wiccan, permissive morality. It is the latter that conveys love, good will, and innocence. The significant element is not merely the reversal of the gaze, but the fact that a Wiccan, gay writer has accepted the principle that systems of faith and behavior are either good or bad, that the bad conspires against the good in a cosmic battle for dominance, and that demonic powers masquerade as righteous beings. The moralistic Christians who would like to annihilate Wiccan-gay culture are the forces of evil that humanity should expose and suppress.

Wiccans are, of course, not the only ones who have adopted a dualistic system of thinking similar to that of evangelicals. The evangelical ideology can be compared to secular dualistic systems of thought, such as communism. Their advocacy of a free market notwithstanding, evangelicals, like communists of the past, promote the ideal of a uniform civic order and citizenship composed of believers in "the cause" who take a positive outlook on their own society and fight the destructive and negative "saboteurs."³⁷ Like communists, evangelicals want to see all human beings adopt their worldview, lifestyle, and mode of behavior and are committed to spreading their faith in an attempt to bring as large a part of humanity as possible into their path.

Conclusion

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the evangelical worldview has come to exercise unprecedented influence on the American mind, shaping America's outlooks on personal, cultural, social, and international matters. Ironically, while many Americans reject the evangelical faith and, at times, some elements of evangelical morality, Americans as a whole have been deeply affected by evangelical concepts, have internalized them, and have accepted them as a means of perceiving and judging the world and its people (at times unwittingly or in a consciously secular manner).

The success of evangelical values in shaping the American mind has resulted to no small degree from an alliance between the evangelical worldview and longstanding American aspirations and anxieties. Contem-

³⁷ Jeffrey Toobin, "Ashcroft's Ascent: Civil Liberties, Terrorism, and the Future," *The New Yorker* (April 15, 2002), 50–63.

porary evangelicalism follows and reinforces some of the most central elements of the American ethos, including the belief that America is not an ordinary nation but rather a chosen superior one. The Gospel of Success reflects both evangelical values and the American ethos, promoting the idea that moral human beings are bound to succeed and make it within the American system. Dissenters and misfits are saboteurs who should be removed completely from society. It is perhaps no accident that evangelical values have become particularly predominant when America has become, as a whole, a suburban commonwealth. Dualism fits the suburban landscape, a place where a uniform consumer culture overshadows particularistic tastes and where all homes, cars, yards, shopping malls, sport facilities, and entertainment centers look alike, where society expects its members to adopt uniform behavior and norms, abhorring and banning any deviations from the norms and disturbances of the routine. Whether carrying an evangelical banner or not, dualistic evangelical values and beliefs have taken hold in America of the twenty-first century because they have fit so easily with longstanding American beliefs and the desire of many Americans to retain or regain their sense of righteousness and mission.

Michael A. Rosenthal

Spinoza's Monism and Jewish Philosophy

Spinoza's place among Jewish thinkers has always been controversial. Although we do not know exactly why he was banned from the Portuguese-Jewish community of Amsterdam in 1656 at the age of 23, we do know that it was for his "abominable heresies which he practiced and taught" as well as "his monstrous deeds."¹ The publication of the *Theological Political Treatise (TTP)* in 1670 and then the *Ethics* posthumously in 1677 offered some clues to the world outside the Portuguese community in Amsterdam as to what the abominable heresies might have been. In the *TTP*, which some have argued is an expanded version of his own defense at the time of his *herem*,² Spinoza argued, among other things, that: prophets were marked by a vivid imagination, not a perfected intellect; the ancient Israelites were only "chosen" on account of their developed system of government during Biblical times and consequently their election was temporal and contingent; that the "divine" laws are really the laws of nature, while the other "ceremonial" laws are human inventions; the Holy Scriptures were not given directly by God, but were a human creation, written by men at different points in time; God directs human affairs through necessary laws of nature not through any miraculous interventions; and that the Scriptures are not a source of philosophical wisdom but rather a moral guide for the masses. Even though the *TTP* was published anonymously, it did not prevent its author from gaining an immediate reputation among Jews and Christians alike as a dangerously unorthodox

¹ From the text of the proclamation of the Ban pronounced on July 27, 1656 (the sixth of Av, 5416), quoted in Steven Nadler, *Spinoza's Heresy: Immortality and the Jewish Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2. Recently, some have argued that deeds were more important than beliefs and that economic circumstances—specifically, the collapse of the family business and the resulting inability to pay dues to the community—played just as important a role. In "Philosophy, Commerce and the Synagogue: Spinoza's Expulsion from the Amsterdam Portuguese Jewish Community in 1656," in *Dutch Jewry: Its History and Secular Culture (1500-2000)*, ed. Jonathan Israel and Reinier Salverda (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 125–39, Jonathan Israel cites the economic motive as one of three factors, the other being religious and philosophical differences. In "The Excommunication of Baruch Spinoza: The Birth of a Philosopher," Odette Vlesing claims that charges of heresy were only a cover for the real issue, which was the Jewish community's reluctance in the face of external pressure to forgive debts (*ibid.*, 141–72).

² See Israel, "Philosophy, Commerce and the Synagogue," 129.

thinker.³ In the *Ethics* the scandalous doctrines of the *TTP* were provided with a rigorous philosophical basis. God is a substance that expresses itself through infinite attributes and infinite modes of those attributes. Spinoza definitively breaks with Medieval Aristotelianism and its Jewish offshoots (such as Maimonides) when he argues that God must be both an immaterial thinking being and also a material extended being. And he argues that God wills all things out of an inner necessity and that all finite things are determined. Not surprisingly, Spinoza prudently implored his friends not to publish a translation of the Latin work into the vernacular Dutch, and he made sure that his philosophical *magnum opus*, the *Ethics*, was not published in his lifetime.⁴

Spinoza's subsequent reception among those who identify themselves as Jewish thinkers has not been much better. In the eighteenth century Moses Mendelssohn came to the aid of his dead friend Lessing's reputation when he defended him from charges of having been secretly a Spinozist, which at least since Bayle, if not earlier, was a charge tantamount to pantheism and hence heresy.⁵ In the nineteenth century Hermann Cohen was outraged by what he considered Spinoza's zeal to outdo Christianity itself in his critique of Judaism. Not only, as Leo Strauss states Cohen's view, did Spinoza take "the side of spiritual and transpolitical Christianity against carnal and political Judaism," he "put religion altogether [i.e., not merely Judaism] outside the sphere of truth." It is not just that Spinoza denies the validity of the law and lacks insight to its prophetic and ethical core, it is for taking sides against Judaism that Cohen believes Spinoza was deservedly excommunicated from the Jewish community.⁶ Twentieth century thinkers have been equally critical for the most part, though it has become common to recognize Spinoza as at least a problematic figure for—if not in—the tradition.⁷ Emmanuel Levinas, for example, agrees with Cohen that Spinoza was guilty of betraying his religion. For Levinas, Spinoza's dogmatic rational-

³ See Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), chap. 16, sect. i.

⁴ Letter 44 (to Jarig Jelles, dated 17 February, 1671) in Spinoza, *The Letters*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, 1995), 243–44. See also Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, chapter 16, section ii, for a discussion of the posthumous publication of the *Ethics*.

⁵ See Frederick C. Beiser's account in *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), specifically section 3.4, "The Critique of Spinozism and Purified Pantheism," 102–5.

⁶ Preface to *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 18–19.

⁷ Seymour Feldman cites Eliezer Schweid who writes: "the beginning [of modern Jewish thought] was the beginning of [its] confrontation with the doctrine of Spinoza." See "Spinoza" in *Routledge History of World Philosophies, Volume II: History of Jewish Philosophy*, ed. D. Frank and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 1997), 627.

ism is a Jewish intellectual's Christianity.⁸ Despite admitting the importance of Spinoza's biblical criticism, Levinas thinks that Jewish sources are not human inventions, but rather point to a "wholly spiritual truth" that goes beyond the letter of the text. It is only the ironic presence of the non-Spinozist within the text—a presence that gives ethics transcendent value—that, in Levinas' opinion, redeems some measure of Spinoza's project.⁹ Inasmuch as philosophy itself has had an often problematic relationship with Jewish religious practice—think of the Maimonidean controversy—Spinoza has been doubly excluded from the embrace of his people.

In this paper I want to explore not so much the historical vicissitudes of Spinoza's reputation but rather the underlying metaphysical and theological assumptions that govern his reception. What those disparate thinkers whom I have briefly surveyed have in common is their profound distaste for Spinoza's metaphysical monism and his notion of an immanent God. So I shall focus on the metaphysics of dualism and the theology of transcendence, which often go hand in hand, and Spinoza's critique of both. I shall examine three issues central in this debate: (1) the "otherness" of God, which is usually thought to be wedded to transcendence and threatened by immanence; (2) the intelligibility of God; and (3) the problem of freedom and necessity. I will argue that there is no sound reason why monism and immanence should not be embraced by Judaism and that there are a variety of reasons in favor of it, chief among them the possibility of eliminating conflict between Judaism and science. I also want to raise some questions about the relation between the Jewish tradition and philosophy, in particular whether there is any dogmatic metaphysical position that ought to be assumed by Jews.

The "Otherness" of God

Let us start with a contemporary critique of Spinoza from within the Amsterdam Portuguese Jewish community. Surprisingly, when Spinoza published the *TTP* in 1670, some fourteen years after the *herem*, there was not much reaction to his work. Isaac Orobio de Castro wrote the first critique of Spinoza's work, the *Certamen Philosophicum*, though it was really addressed to another philosopher, Johann Bredenburg, who had tried to formulate a Spinozistic form of Christianity. In Seymour Feldman's words, De Castro claims that:

⁸ See "The Spinoza Case," in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Seán Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1990), 106–10.

⁹ Emmanuel Levinas, "Have you Reread Baruch," in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, 111–18.

Spinoza's naturalistic and deterministic monism is just another form of ancient stoic materialism, and this doctrine is inimical to biblical religion. The latter accentuates the metaphysical gap between creator and creature, a distance that allows the former to do anything to what he has made. In particular, miracles are possible for biblical religion; for Spinoza they are not. Orobio is also quite critical of Spinoza's denial of free will, a doctrine that Orobio makes central to Judaism. (627)

The very same critique has been expressed by more than one modern thinker. Steven Schwarzschild offers a four-fold categorization of the various kinds of relation of a transcendent God to the world, in which God is either: (1) entirely transcendent without any relation to the world; (2) entirely immanent in the universe—that is, identified wholly or in part with it; (3) transcendent but linked to the world through some physical link, such as the spheres or the incarnate Christ; or (4) transcendent but linked through the will expressed in some ethical commandment or set of commandments, such as the *halakhah* (62–63).¹⁰ The first category is that of the unbeliever, the *epikoros*, while Spinoza of course falls in the second category and as such falls outside Judaism. “The fate of Spinoza,” Schwarzschild writes, “—excommunication at the hands of the Jewish community of Amsterdam—tellingly bespeaks the attitude of Judaism to this approach” (62). Judaism, Schwarzschild thinks, is eternally the same and found in the last category.¹¹ The transcendent God relates to the world through His will and the will of his creatures.

Kenneth Seeskin approves of this view and deepens our understanding of it. He writes, “The crux of monotheism is not only belief in a single deity but belief in a deity who is different from everything else” (24).¹² The metaphysical justification of the radically transcendent God is found in the Biblical story of creation. Although it is not entirely necessary to the dogma of creation that it be wedded to a doctrine of metaphysical dualism—that is, the view that there are two fundamental metaphysical kinds of being, one immaterial, such as God or a soul, the other material, such as matter or body—since the impact of Greek philosophy on Judaism it has most often been the case that the story of creation has been interpreted in this light.¹³ In other words, an immaterial God created a material world. By the time of Maimo-

¹⁰ “The Lure of Immanence—The Crisis in Contemporary Religious Thought,” in *The Pursuit of the Ideal: Jewish Writings of Steven Schwarzschild*, ed. Menachem Kellner (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 61–82.

¹¹ Schwarzschild names the mediation of volition the “Jewish twist”: “It is quite easy to prove this proposition from virtually the entire history of Biblical, Talmudic, and mediaeval Jewish philosophical thought” (63).

¹² “The Challenge of Monotheism,” in *Searching for a Distant God: The Legacy of Maimonides* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 23–42.

¹³ See Nadler, *Spinoza's Heresy*, who traces the influence of a Greek metaphysical dualism on the specific problem of immortality back to the rabbinic period (57).

nides, such a view was indeed central. As Seeskin notes in another, related article, “Maimonides makes no compromise” on this issue: “‘There is,’ [Maimonides] insists, ‘absolutely no likeness in any respect whatever between Him and the things created by Him’” (116).¹⁴ Maimonides uses Aristotelian cosmology, in which God or the prime mover is pure actuality or form and the sub-lunar sphere is material, to establish the scientific basis of creation, despite the fact, of course, that Aristotle denies any volition to God and asserts that the world is eternal. Maimonides recognizes that there is a problem here, but he argues that Aristotle’s claims about the eternity of the world are not demonstrative and are subject to doubt. Thus, creation is at least possible, and since the Law presupposes it, we ought to believe in it.

Seeskin underlines Maimonides’ commitment to the Law in this issue. God must be separate not so much for metaphysical but for ethical reasons: “Once the otherness of God is surrendered, once our image of God is measured in human terms, love of God would become a form of self-love, and everything sacred in the religion would be lost” (“The Challenge of Monotheism,” 38). Only in this way can the conception of God’s nature remain consistent with the practices and demands of Judaism. An immanent conception of God does not distinguish God from nature. If we cannot distinguish God from nature, then love of God is tantamount to love of nature. And since we too are part of nature, then we essentially love ourselves when we love God. God has become merely an image of humanity and so immanence is a source of idolatry. Moreover, a God that is identical with nature does not create it or have a plan for it. And as the image of a transcendent God with a providential plan for us evaporates in the heat of the immanent critique, so too does at least one central justification for obeying the *mitzvot*. If we are to preserve the Law, then we must accept that it was created by a transcendent God with the power to reward and punish us for our acts.

In this case, as in the other two we shall examine below, Spinoza has been unfairly maligned. His critics rely on a standard misinterpretation of his metaphysics as pantheist and also on a very essentialist conception of Judaism, one that ignores its own history. First, we have to remember that Spinoza’s whole metaphysical system is based on a critique of Cartesian dualism. Instead of an immaterial God who has created a world with two really distinct substances, mind and body, Spinoza argues that there can only be one substance (*Ethics*, Part 1, Proposition 5), which is infinite and

¹⁴ Kenneth Seeskin, “Maimonides, Spinoza, and the Problem of Creation,” in *Jewish Themes in Spinoza’s Philosophy*, ed. Heidi M. Ravven and Lenn E. Goodman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 115–30. He refers to the *Guide of the Perplexed*, I, 35 (80 in Pines translation).

expressed through infinitely many attributes in infinitely many modes (*Ethics*, Part 1, proposition 9).¹⁵ He identifies that substance with God (*Ethics*, Part 1, Proposition 14) and claims that because it is a necessary being whose cause is internal (*causa sui*), it must be eternal. Now it is true that in an infamous passage later in the *Ethics*, Spinoza writes of *deus sive natura*, God or nature (Part 4, Preface, and Part 4, Proposition 4, Demonstration), which seems to identify the two. If God is the same as nature, then he must be subject to change and division, which would mean he is neither simple, unique, nor immutable—in short, he would be less than perfect. On one point, at least, Spinoza invited this reading. It is a traditional problem in natural theology to explain how an immaterial God can create or causally interact with a material world. Spinoza overcomes this difficulty simply by following through on the commitment to the view that if one thing acts on another, then they must have something in common. If God acts on the material world in some sense, then they must have something fundamental in common (i.e., material substance). Yet while God must be identical with nature in this fundamental sense, this does not mean that God must be identical with all of nature in all its variety. God is not identical with all of nature but with the active principles of nature, which is in all things as what we might call the laws of nature. God is immanent in all things in the precise sense that he is a cause of all things through his expression in the laws of nature, whether those laws govern material things (such as the laws of physics) or mental things (such as the laws of psychology). This is what Martial Gueroult in his important commentary on the *Ethics* called “panentheism.”¹⁶ God does have fundamental features in common with nature, and in that sense is identical with it, but is not, strictly speaking the same as all of its parts.¹⁷

This is not the same as the explanation of God's relation to the world in terms of emanation employed by the neo-platonic Kabbalists.¹⁸ Kabbalism, to the extent that it relies upon neo-Platonic models, still maintains what I

¹⁵ Edwin Curley, ed. and trans., *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

¹⁶ Martial Gueroult, *Spinoza 1: Dieu* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968), chap. VII. Donagan puts the difference in this way: “Roughly, a *pantheist* holds that everything is God, a *panentheist* that everything is in God.” Donagan, *Spinoza* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 95.

¹⁷ Spinoza himself writes in Letter 73 to Henry Oldenburg: “as to the view of certain people that the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* rests on the identification of God with Nature (by the latter of which they understand a kind of mass or corporeal matter) they are quite mistaken” (*Letters*, 332).

¹⁸ It bears noting, as I will mention again in conclusion, that the profound importance of Kabbalistic mysticism within the history of Judaism poses a major problem for both Seeskin's and especially Schwarzschild's claim that the essence of Judaism is best expressed through either an Aristotelian or neo-Kantian models of transcendence.

would call a hierarchical, metaphysical dualism. It denigrates body as a lower form of existence or transforms body into something with higher meaning through investing it with a magical and symbolic significance. That is, the actions of bodies affect the emanations of God's being through their symbolic actions. The material world has meaning and indeed theological efficacy to the extent it bears a symbolic relation with the higher realms of being. The ultimate source of being is the *ein-sof*, something that is beyond description and is certainly not material, though its emanations take on material nature through a series of intermediaries whose status is unclear. Spinoza's system on the other hand places extended material being at the same metaphysical level as thought or spirit, that is, as an expression of God's infinite essence. And although his infinite modes bear some relation to the intermediary hypostases of the neo-Platonic tradition, they are not beings separate from God but the intelligible and causal features of his essence.¹⁹ Still, Spinoza must rebut the traditional argument that says that if God were material, then he would not be immutable or simple but subject to change and division.

None of this is to say that Spinoza's immanent God avoids all the traditional problems or indeed does not create new ones. Seeskin points to Wolfson's claim that Spinoza suffers from a problem common among the theorists of emanation. Just as they cannot adequately explain "how we get from a simple God to a complex world," Spinoza cannot explain how "an infinite and eternal God can be the cause of finite modes" ("The Problem of Creation, 123). Spinoza's answer is hardly expansive and is contained in a key proposition: "From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes" (*Ethics*, Part 1, Proposition 16). The idea here is that if God's nature were not expressed in infinitely many ways, including in finite as well as infinite things, then it would be limited in some way, which implies some external cause, and so would not truly be God or substance. Whether we accept this answer or not, it illustrates just one of the many problems such a system faces.

The key point is that if we accept the panentheist line of interpretation Spinoza does not fall prey to the most serious problems pointed out by his critics. It is interesting that Seeskin often uses Greek mythology as the example of pantheism, which emphasizes the pagan (i.e., non-Jewish) dimension of this view.²⁰ But although Spinoza was certainly influenced by non-Jewish sources, just as Maimonides was, his conception of God's nature certainly does not strike one as anthropomorphic or leading to such an

¹⁹ See Seeskin's discussion of the problem of intermediaries in both "The Problem of Creation," 118–19, and "The Challenge of Monotheism," 29.

²⁰ E.g., "Maimonides, Spinoza, and the Problem of Creation," 115.

idea. He was relentless in pointing out the dangers of anthropomorphism and has been relentlessly criticized for his cold and distant conception of God. What immanence offers is a conception of otherness different than transcendence: God is separate without being immaterial, distant without being unrelated to the natural world.

The Intelligibility of God

This raises a second and important issue in the debate between transcendent and immanent conceptions of God, the problem of intelligibility. Seeskin states the problem nicely:

One way to understand the problem is to imagine a spectrum with uniqueness at one end and intelligibility at the other. The more unique God is, the harder it will be for God to fit our concepts or be subsumed under our laws.... If our categories always fall short of God, any claim to know God is suspect. As Bahya says, there is an unavoidable paradox: The moment we pretend that God is near to our understanding, we lose God completely. ("Challenge of Monotheism," 30)

Maimonides is the great example of a Jewish philosopher who seeks to place God beyond all understanding. The categories we use to catalogue his attributes (perfect, immutable, etc.) are neither *univocal*—meaning that they apply strictly to both things in the created world and to God—nor merely analogous or *equivocal*—meaning that they have one meaning in relation to created things another in relation to God. The path of analogy, which Saadia Gaon and Thomas Aquinas took, says that our words only provide the barest of relations to the Almighty, yet we use them nonetheless.²¹ Maimonides, in contrast, refuses to draw any inference from the explanation of created things to the Creator. None of our linguistic categories for his attributes are remotely adequate. So all we have is the path of "negative theology": we can say what God is *not* and thereby approach God's nature not through a positive description, whether direct or analogous, but by limiting our own ignorance.²² On one reading at least, Maimonides certainly runs the risk of falling into Schwarzschild's first category, i.e., the epicurean who places God beyond the world to such an extent that he has no relation to it at all. On another reading, Maimonides becomes closer to a skeptical fideist: we cannot know anything about the ultimate nature of God but we must believe nonetheless. Maimonides obviously is not an epicurean because that would undermine his commitment to the Law, but neither is he a thoroughgoing metaphysical skeptic because that would run contrary to his systematic employment of Aristotelian ideas.

²¹ Saadia Gaon, *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, trans. Samuel Rosenblatt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), Treatise II; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Question XIII.

²² See *Guide*, II, 17 and Seeskin's discussion in "The Problem of Creation," 118.

While Maimonides tries to define a tenuous position on the spectrum of uniqueness and intelligibility, Spinoza's place is apparently clearer. Spinoza's philosophical rationalism is perhaps the most uncompromising in the history of philosophy. More than the two seventeenth century philosophers, Descartes and Leibniz, with whom he is usually grouped as a "continental rationalist," Spinoza adopts the principle of sufficient reason without qualification. To explain something is to give a reason for it. To say that there is something for which we cannot use reason is to violate the very principle of explanation itself, whose validity depends on a consistent and universal application of the explanatory model we have adopted. This is even more so when what we are trying to explain is supposedly the origin of all things in the universe, i.e., God. So when Descartes limits his explanatory rationalism at the threshold of God's nature, he is threatening the validity of his other explanations as well.²³ Spinoza thus is committed in principle to the intelligibility of God's nature.

This tells us that we can know God's nature as a substance with infinite attributes that express themselves in infinitely many ways (or modes), but it does not lead us to think that we know all that there is to know about God, either its essential nature or its expression in an infinite number of modes. For after all, as Spinoza stresses repeatedly throughout the *Ethics*, we are finite things, limited in our power to exist and our ability to know. We do have some fundamental things in common with God and that allows us to know some things about him. Otherwise we would be unable to assert meaningfully that God exists. As Seeskin notes, intelligibility implies some relation ("Challenge," 31). The problem here, as we have seen above, is that when we assert that there is a relation between us and God, we run the risk of understanding God in our terms and hence reducing what stands above us, for which we ought to feel awe and wonder, to something that is equal to or even below us, for which we feel nothing at best or contempt at worst.

What we need to consider here, however, is the framing of the problem itself. Why are uniqueness and intelligibility mutually exclusive concepts that need to be at opposite ends of a putative spectrum? Again, Spinoza is showing us that we need not accept the dilemma as it has traditionally been posited. In the traditional view, Spinoza has clearly erred in the direction of trying to say too much about God. As Seeskin puts it, "We can understand silence as the price we pay for uniqueness. If God is truly unique, any at-

²³ See, for instance, the Fourth *Meditation*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. II, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), where he writes, "there is considerable rashness in thinking myself capable of investigating the *impenetrable* purposes of God" (39). Spinoza of course denies that God has any purposes.

tempt to praise or characterize God can only end in failure" ("Challenge," 35). But there are also dangers of saying too little. Silence runs the risk of atheism. "But atheism, as Levinas remarks, is a risk that has to be run, because only through the process of denying inadequate conceptions of God can we reach the idea of true transcendence" (36).²⁴ Of course this assumes from the beginning that transcendence is the place where we want to end up, and it wholly ignores the possibility that the idea of God as a necessary concept for scientific explanation of the world. In other words, the philosophical idea of God expresses in the purest form the demand for a unified field of nature, in which the laws we discover apply universally and necessarily. True, this raises the issue that, as we saw earlier, obviously affected Spinoza's compatriot, Isaac Orobio de Castro: once we have eliminated the abyss between creator and creation and committed ourselves to a thoroughgoing scientific view of creation, then there is no longer any room for miracles, at least understood in the traditional theistic sense. But this is a problem that plagues any Jewish philosopher who takes science seriously—Maimonides, for instance—and it is hard to see why such an idea of God in service of science threatens us with idolatry. To run away from science to protect a mysterious conception of God would truly be to seek the *asylum ignorantiae*, the sanctuary of ignorance, that Spinoza ridicules in the appendix to Part 1 of the *Ethics*.

Necessity and Freedom

One reason often given for why the scientific worldview is dangerous is that if we extend it to the domain of human action then it eliminates the free will that is requisite for moral action. This has obvious implications for a Jewish conception of moral life based on the idea that God has given us a set of binding commandments, the *Halakhah*, which we have the choice to obey or not, and the threat of reward and punishment that is consequent upon the choice we make.²⁵ The idea of a transcendent God is usually seen as crucial to this framework. God is likened to a sovereign who has the authority to pronounce laws and to punish those who do not obey them. If God were merely one of us, then His authority would not be unconditional but dependent on our agreement in some way. Covenantal thinking is central to Jewish thought, as some have recently argued,²⁶ but it is not exactly a contract between equals. The metaphysics of dualism is

²⁴ Seeskin's reference to Levinas is to *Difficult Freedom*, 15.

²⁵ See Deut 11: 25–27, "Behold, I have set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if you do not obey...."

²⁶ See David Novak, *Natural Law in Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and David Hartmann, *A Living Covenant* (Boston: Free Press, 1985).

likewise thought to be essential. Whereas the natural world might be governed by blind necessity (though of course, with the possibility of miracles, it too can be in service of human ends that fulfill God's providential plan), the human world is not. Insofar as we have bodies we are subject to the necessity of nature, but insofar as we have immaterial souls we have the capacity of a will that can choose to act otherwise and indeed contrary to nature's determination. It is due to our free will that we can legitimately be praised or blamed, judged innocent or guilty, and punished or rewarded. Spinoza's determinism appears to condemn us to the blind machinations of nature without any choice in the matter, making all the usual categories of moral life irrelevant.

In context of our discussion so far, we must distinguish between two kinds of metaphysical frameworks for moral life. The first is the classical, pre-Kantian, voluntarist view that human beings have a free will because God has a free will. Contrary to Spinoza's assertions, God is not a necessary being who lacks the will to do otherwise, but a wholly free being who has endowed us *b'tzelem Adonai*—in the image of God—with some spark of that same capacity. The more we free ourselves from the determination of our dumb body—that is, the more we act in accordance with our free will aided by the intellect—the more we become like God. The second view is the Kantian view and its offspring, a view that has had considerable influence on the Jewish tradition through thinkers such as Cohen, Levinas, Schwarzschild, and, despite his Maimonidean inclinations, Seeskin as well. Unlike the classical view, which claims positive metaphysical knowledge about the nature of our freedom, the Kantians offer what they call a transcendental argument. They claim that we cannot know the metaphysical foundations of our freedom but that we must assume it as a condition for moral action. In more technical terms, the moral law is a synthetic *a priori* principle. As Kant famously put it, he wishes to restrict the domain of knowledge to what we can experience, thereby preserving faith in the light of science.²⁷ The Jewish thinkers under his influence argue that his attack on Judaism as a heteronomous system of law was misguided and that it really offers a divinely inspired framework for realizing our moral freedom. What both the classical and the Kantian view have in common is that the denial of free will in Spinozism undermines the framework of law essential to a moral life.

Although there have always been a considerable number of philosophers who have held to the stoic (or compatibilist) conception of morality found in Spinoza, it has usually been a position held by a minority of thinkers and disdained by the masses. Especially in the post-Cartesian philosophical

²⁷ See "Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason," *Critique of Practical Reason*, section IX.

landscape in which we live, it has become “intuitive” that our will is radically free in the sense that it is not necessarily subject to nature and in principle can act otherwise. So any defense of Spinoza's moral philosophy is made very difficult from the get-go. Moreover, it would take me too far afield to offer a full defense of his moral philosophy. Let it suffice to say that in Spinoza's view the idea of a free will is itself the major prejudice that stands in the way of a scientific understanding of our nature and what best accords with it (*Ethics*, Part 1, appendix). The crucial point I wish to make is that despite offering a critique of the traditional philosophical basis of morality in a voluntarist conception of God and a free will, Spinoza does not undermine morality itself but rather re-orientates it within the bounds of his metaphysics.

There are really two ways in which he does this. The first is designed for those whose minds are still enslaved to false notions about God and nature. The *Theological-Political Treatise* does not attempt to dispute the validity of popular religion, as some have asserted, but rather seeks to reform it in ways that will better ensure the individual and public good. Some metaphysical reeducation is required—such as seeing God's actions as necessary and denying the traditional view of miracles—but much of Spinoza's work is aimed at showing that read properly—that is, stripped of false theological accretions—the Scriptures offer a valuable guide for moral life.²⁸ It is true that he disputes the divine (or really, the supernatural) origin of religious law, but he does not question its validity within the context of a sovereign community. In the *Ethics*, he addresses a more sophisticated philosophical audience and takes up a question that has preoccupied him since his earliest work, the search for the highest God, which he identifies as the *amor dei intellectualis*, the intellectual love of God. Spinoza would agree with the view that reward and punishment are essential features of any moral system. In response to one of his correspondents who raises the standard criticism of stoic morality that its necessitarianism undermines reward and punishment, Spinoza replies that it does no such thing.²⁹ Because all actions are necessary so too are our judgments of praise and blame, and they can and must be incorporated into as system of justice in which everyone acts

²⁸ He even recognizes that it appears as if we act on the basis of a free-will and such an assumption can be practically useful, perhaps anticipating Kant (*TTP*, chapter IV)!

²⁹ See Letter 43 (to Jacob Ostens, circa 1671): “Furthermore, this inevitable necessity of things does not do away with either divine or human laws. For moral precepts, whether or not they receive the form of law from God himself, are still divine and salutary...And finally, whether we do what we do necessarily or freely, we are still led by hope or by fear...” (*Letters*, 239).

under a veil of ignorance.³⁰ Like Maimonides, Spinoza does not think that reward and punishment occur after death; rather, they are bestowed by God upon us in this life as a direct consequence of virtuous or vicious actions. If we set aside the misreading that Spinoza offered morality for the masses but license for the elite, then it appears that Spinoza was providing a new and rigorous foundation for moral life in the modern world.

There is no reason, as far as I can see, to claim that one metaphysical foundation for morality has a more solid origin in Jewish sources or law rather than another. Both philosophical points of view, the classical and Kantian, were not first articulated by Jewish thinkers but only adopted later by them. The real test is whether one philosophical view accords better than another with the sources. This is an interesting debate and all I can do in this section is suggest that Spinoza's critique of the traditional foundations of morality in a theology of transcendence and a metaphysics of dualism does not lead one to abandon the traditional sources of moral life. The point of the *Theological-Political Treatise* is to offer a reading of Scripture in light of a new, immanent metaphysics, which preserves its role as a moral and political guide.³¹ Spinoza tried to provide a new basis for moral life rather than overturning it, one that he felt built on our experience as human beings and meshed with many elements of the traditions we have produced over time.

Spinoza and the Jewish Tradition

Now we can return to the ambiguous place that Spinoza occupies in the pantheon of Jewish thought. As we have seen, he is more often seen as someone who confronts Judaism rather than someone with the potential to advance it. Spinoza himself did not think that his views were necessarily foreign to the tradition as his critics charged. In the scholium to the crucial proposition in the *Ethics* in which he establishes the doctrine of parallelism, in which "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things" (Part 2, Proposition 7), he writes that "Some of the Hebrews seem to have seen this, as if through a cloud, when they maintained that God, God's intellect, and the things understood by him are one and the same." Who these Hebrews were is itself unclear,

³⁰ By this veil I do not mean the Rawlsian "Original Position." All it indicates here is that, in Spinoza's system, finite modes have perfect knowledge neither of themselves nor of their circumstances.

³¹ For more detailed suggestions on how to read the work in this way, see my articles: "Why Spinoza Chose the Hebrews: The Exemplary Function of Prophecy in the *Theological-Political Treatise*," in *History of Political Thought* 18:2 (1997): 207–41, and "Persuasive Passions: Rhetoric and the Interpretation of Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise*," in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 85 (2003): 249–68.

though various conjectures have been advanced.³² In a letter to Henry Oldenburg Spinoza makes an even more sweeping claim: that his view that God is the immanent cause of all things not the transitive cause is found in Paul, perhaps the ancient philosophers, and “I would even venture to say, together with the ancient Hebrews, as far as may be conjectured from certain traditions, though these have suffered much corruption” (Letter 73).³³ This remarkable passage is the chief inspiration for my conclusion, namely, that we should consider Spinoza part of the Jewish tradition rather than its antagonist.

In some of the critics we have surveyed, it is often assumed or stipulated before the argument begins what position the “tradition” takes or what its “essence” is. But the point of rehearsing Spinoza’s counter-arguments has been to question that certainty. It is in the interests of his critics to claim that Spinoza’s goal was to demolish tradition. Instead, I offer the idea that Spinoza adds a brilliant and no doubt controversial commentary to the tradition. His view, expressed most clearly in the *TTP*, is that there is no dogmatic metaphysical position stipulated in the Torah. Indeed, he advocates the separation of philosophy from religion in order to preserve what he sees as the latter’s essentially ethical mission. Indeed, in an interesting recent book, Menachem Kellner has argued that it is Maimonides who has led us to think that dogma is essential to Jewish tradition, when in fact it is he who introduced the notion to us.³⁴ Spinoza’s view that religious dogma has merely political (and some moral) utility and that metaphysics (and natural science) ought to be absent from it is entirely consistent with this revision of the history of Jewish tradition. What we find, I think, is that there are certain assumptions built into the often critical reception of Spinoza, assumptions that themselves must be subjected to the same historical examination to which Spinoza subjected the Bible. In particular, we must ask ourselves why transcendence and dualism are seen as necessary foundations for a Jewish philosophy. These views often conflict with other aspects of the tradition, whereas, as we have seen, Spinoza’s view in fact preserves many of the features of Judaism that his critics claim it undermines. Perhaps the separation of religion and natural science, theology and philosophy, knowledge and morals, reinforces the contemporary strand of Jewish thought, perhaps best exemplified by Levinas, that suggests that ethics should be the foundation of religious life.

³² Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, I, 2:26, suggests Maimonides (*Guide*, I, 68), but that is not entirely convincing. He also notes some possible rabbinic and other sources, such as *Genesis Rabbah* 68, 9 *et al*; Philo, *De Somniis*, I, ii; and Crescas, *Or Adonai*, I, ii (2:296f).

³³ Spinoza, *The Letters*, trans. Samuel Shirley, ed. Steven Barbone, Lee Rice, and Jacob Adler (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Co., 1995), 332.

³⁴ Menachem Kellner, *Must a Jew Believe Anything?* (Portland: Littman Library, 1999).

Let me suggest, finally, that what really bothers these critics about Spinoza is not his metaphysics at all, but rather the fact that his sociological account of the origin and function of religious traditions challenges the traditional understanding of the uniqueness of the Jewish people and the meaning of its election. Judaism is not essentially unique but only contingently so. There may indeed be other paths to the same good end. The metaphysics of immanence can make sense of this historical claim, while that of transcendence is frustrated. As Levinas points out forcefully, the cold glare of Spinoza's sociological analysis does not preserve the mystery of religion. The question is whether that mystery, fortified by transcendence and dualism, is required for the Jewish sources to remain alive for us today.³⁵

³⁵ A shorter version of this paper was presented at a conference, "Light Against Darkness: Dualism in Ancient Mediterranean Religion and the Contemporary World," sponsored by the departments of religion of UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University in June 2003. I would like to thank the organizers of the conference, especially Armin Lange; the editors of this volume, Eric Meyers, Armin Lange, Randall Styers, and Bennie Reynolds; and the conference participants, particularly Eric Meyers, who commented on my paper.

Randall Styers

Displacements and Proliferations

Moves Beyond Dualism in Contemporary Continental Thought

At the time of his death in 1994, the philosopher of science Paul Feyerabend was working on a text posthumously published as *Conquest of Abundance*. Feyerabend begins this text with a surprisingly obvious premise: the world is a place of abundance, a superabundant array of stimuli in constant motion and proliferation. In the face of this saturation, Feyerabend says, the great accomplishment of the human mind is to provide a cognitive or conceptual web capable of triaging those stimuli, screening out the vast majority of possible sensations and perceptions in order to allow conscious awareness to emerge. At every moment, almost every functioning human body is receiving a practically infinite range of sensory input. Every nerve ending is processing information and transmitting a constant stream of data, and yet consciousness can only coalesce because the vast majority of that input is repressed, much of it not rising even to the level of background noise. But as one's circumstances or interests change, information that never before made its way into consciousness can suddenly assume enormous importance, becoming the predominant focus of attention.¹

Feyerabend underscores the role of human cognitive schemes in the “conquest of abundance,” a theme that is central to the critical consideration of dualistic thinking. He argues, first, that it is utterly essential that human beings have these cognitive schemes; they serve as the very fabric of consciousness. At the same time, though, Feyerabend works to demonstrate that these schemes are impermanent, contingent products of human interactions with material and social environments and that they mask far, far more than they reveal. This insight directs us to consider both the specific factors (psychological, social, and political among them) that give rise to particular cognitive schemes and also the effects of these schemes on human perception and interaction. Dualist thought has provided one of the most pervasive conceptual grids through the history of human culture, guiding the

¹ Paul Feyerabend, *Conquest of Abundance: A Tale of Abstraction versus the Richness of Being* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), particularly 3–18.

processes of screening and sorting stimuli, a potent resource for helping us, in Mircea Eliade's phrase, "found the world."²

My objective in this essay is to examine recent efforts by a set of influential critical thinkers working within the traditions of continental philosophy to undermine—and perhaps move beyond—dualist thought. Challenges to dualistic thinking have a long history in the Western philosophical tradition,³ but in recent decades a growing number of important thinkers from a broad range of academic disciplines have worked to explore the distinctive role that dualistic thought and binary logic have played in shaping modernity and, then, to consider the viability of efforts to dislodge those dualisms or to move beyond them. In this essay I will focus particularly on the work of Bruno Latour, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Each of these thinkers has sought to sound the limits of dualism, and in that process each of them has offered important reflections on one of the predominant modern religious dualisms—transcendence and immanence. In examining these specific responses to dualist thought, I want to move toward two guiding issues. First, it is important to consider what it is about the contemporary cultural and intellectual situation that makes the challenge to dualism so pervasive among such a broad range of thinkers. And second, I conclude by examining the implications of these efforts to move beyond dualism for the development of contemporary religious thought.

Political events over recent years have vividly illustrated the power of dualist thinking to mobilize large populations. In his martial pronouncements, George W. Bush repeatedly reconfigured world historical complexities into a simplistic bifurcation of good and evil, with us or against us. This dualistic framing holds enormous rhetorical—and political—power, resonating deeply within the cultural imaginary. One of the most common strategies in contemporary political rhetoric is to reduce a complex array of possible options and perspectives to a simplistic set of binary alternatives.

Yet as the essays in this volume amply demonstrate, while the basic structure of dualist thought has been pervasive through human history, that structure can assume quite varied forms—and play quite varied roles—in different cultural settings. The specific mechanisms through which dualisms are deployed and the particular social effects they produce differ profoundly in distinct historical contexts. One of the great preoccupations of a range of

² Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), 21–22.

³ See Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Revolt Against Dualism: An Inquiry Concerning the Existence of Ideas* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1930).

important critical thinkers in the last decades of the twentieth century was to map the particular configuration of dualisms that have served to undergird Western modernity.

One notable contribution to this effort comes from Gustavo Benavides. Joining the contentious fray of theorists debating exactly what it means to be “modern,” Benavides argues that the very notion of modernity is based on a distinctive mode of dualist thinking. As he states it, “a condition of modernity presupposes an act of self-conscious distancing from a past or situation regarded as naive.”⁴ Modernity emerges, Benavides explains, only as a distinctive notion of the present is configured in differentiation from a past seen as essentially benighted, static, and inferior. The sense of modernity thus depends on the construction and deployment of a dualistic divide between the modern and the nonmodern, the open and the closed, movement and stasis.⁵

This perspective is extremely helpful in illuminating the operations of binary logic within modernity. First, it reveals that there have been multiple “modernities” through human history, taking very different forms and inflections (political modernities, philosophical modernities, aesthetic modernities, technological modernities, and others). The type of self-referentiality and differentiation on which the notion of the “modern” turns is not a distinctive effect of recent Western history, but instead a far more recurrent and pervasive aspect of human culture (often linked, Benavides argues, to urbanization).⁶ Further, Benavides’s perspective highlights that the defining sense of what it means to be modern involves “a constant awareness of the contingent nature of the social arrangements of which one is a part,” “a kind of perpetual critique” configured through opposition, distancing, and self-referentiality.⁷ Modernity is about change, a change fueled by means of contrast, and this insight will be central as we examine thinkers often considered “post”-modern.

In light of Benavides’s assessment, understanding what is distinctive about Western modernity will turn on an examination of the particular modes through which power has been mobilized within the West. We do indeed find around us truly distinctive modes of power (“power over other human beings, practical power over nature in terms of the capacity for economic production, and intellectual power over nature in the form of capacity for prediction”).⁸ Western modernity has achieved an unprecedented

⁴ Gustavo Benavides, “Modernity,” in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 186–204, particularly 187.

⁵ See *ibid.*, 186–204.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 192–200.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 188–89.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.

instrumental control of the material environment. As Benavides indicates, the deployment of these new forms of power has been facilitated through the circulation of a particular network of dualistic differentiations: “from the organic to the mechanic; from the corporate to the individual; from hierarchy to equality; from an understanding of reality in which everything resonates with everything else...to one built around precision and the increasing differentiation of domains.”⁹ In considering the distinctive shape that religion has assumed within Western modernity, we can add a range of cognates to this chain, cognates with venerable roots, but with decidedly new inflections: differentiations between the spiritual and the material, between religion and magic, between superstition and scientific rationality, between the religious and the secular.

Benavides’s understanding of the nature of modernity is extremely valuable, but for an amplification of one of his major themes it is useful to turn to the work of the sociologist of science Bruno Latour. In his text *We Have Never Been Modern*, Latour echoes Benavides concerning the mode of temporal differentiation adhering within the notion of the modern, the juxtaposition of a modern present with “an archaic and stable past.”¹⁰ Yet in seeking to understand both the operations of this notion of modernity and recent postmodern challenges to it, Latour offers an illuminating assessment of what he calls “the modern constitution.”¹¹

One of the constitutive aspects of Western modernity, Latour explains, has been the formulation of a heightened differentiation or antinomy between nonhuman nature and human culture. To be modern in the distinctively Western sense, he says, is to recognize an essential, dualistic bifurcation between these “two entirely distinct ontological zones.”¹² In fact, a great deal of the rhetorical self-presentation of Western modernity has involved the effort to clarify and police the opposition between a stable, inert natural world and the changing, contingent realm of human social interests. The birth of modern humanism was coupled with the birth of the nonhuman, the world of “things, or objects, or beasts” seen as operating according to predictable and stable natural laws.¹³

Overlaid upon this fundamental differentiation, we find an array of paradoxical modern representations of nature and culture, particularly with regard to the dualist categories of transcendence and immanence. On the one hand, for example, nature is seen as transcendentally surpassing the im-

⁹ Ibid., 190.

¹⁰ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 10.

¹¹ See *ibid.*, 13–48.

¹² Ibid., 10.

¹³ Ibid., 13.

manent and constructed realm of human society. Yet on the other hand, nature is portrayed as immanently subject to the infinite artifice and constructivist powers of transcendent cultural manipulation. Into this unstable mix comes the abstracted God of natural theology. On the one hand, this God is configured as securely, infinitely transcendent, leaving both nature and culture unmolested. At the same time, ancient theological themes have also been reconfigured to render the divine wholly immanent within the private confines of the individual human heart. Latour summarizes this maze of contradictory foundational principles as follows:

A threefold transcendence and a threefold immanence in a crisscrossed schema that locks in all the possibilities: this is where I locate the power of the moderns. They have not made Nature; they make Society; they make Nature; they have not made Society; they have not made either, God has made everything; God has made nothing, they have made everything.¹⁴

These paradoxical differentiations also swirl to further the illusion that in modernity “knowledge, interest, justice and power” are themselves all safely differentiated.¹⁵ To be modern in this hypnotic view would be to see reality aright, in an abstract, objective view from nowhere, unpolluted by power or self-interest.

In light of this mapping, the primary thrust of Latour’s critical project in this text—his endeavor to demonstrate that we have never been modern—lies in unmasking this complex dualistic framework as a type of ideological mystification. He seeks to show that the dualistically defined human and nonhuman realms arise conjointly, in utterly interlocking interdependence. In a similar vein, he argues that despite the ostentatious efforts to police a separation between the human and the nonhuman—to configure these realms as if they could be insulated from one another—the perverse success of Western modernity has actually depended on the ingenious and profligate intermingling of nature and culture. Under the ideological cloak of their ontological differentiation, nature and culture interweave to produce astounding networks and “mixtures between entirely new types of beings, hybrids of nature and culture.”¹⁶ Latour concludes that the dualistic rhetoric of a separation between nature and culture has actually played an indispensable role in their intermingling:

the more we forbid ourselves to conceive of hybrids, the more possible their interbreeding becomes—such is the paradox of the moderns...the modern Constitution

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, 34–37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

allows the expanded proliferation of the hybrids whose existence, whose very possibility, it denies.¹⁷

Only as it becomes increasingly impossible to avoid acknowledging that the world is populated by hybridity, that nature and culture can never be pulled apart, that the foundational principle of modernity is monstrously impossible, can we move toward a clearer recognition of the realities within which we live.

In his extensive work on the history and sociology of science, Latour demonstrates the intermingling of nature and culture most vividly through examples, as he displays the dizzying inbreeding of physical and chemical reactions with their social and political counterparts.¹⁸ As he says in examining recent attempts to analyze depletion of the ozone layer:

A single thread links the most esoteric sciences and the most sordid politics, the most distant sky and some factory in the Lyon suburbs, dangers on a global scale and the impending local elections or the next board meeting. The horizons, the stakes, the time frames, the actors—none of these is commensurable, yet they are there, caught up in the same story.¹⁹

The story of our pseudo-modernity is incomprehensible without recognizing the constant interplay of all these varied agents and forces.

I will return to Latour below, but for now let me underscore the most relevant aspect of his analysis of modern dualistic thought. Latour seeks to diagnose the specific nature of modernity, and he concludes that its principal distinguishing feature has been the formulation and deployment of a heightened dualism between nature and culture. This binary has interwoven with a number of cognate dualisms in a complex scheme, one all the more potent because of its multiply layered paradox.

Latour responds to this dualistic scheme by seeking to unmask its ideological effects, to demonstrate its artifice and duplicity through a materialist analysis showing that neither of the poles the modern constitution seeks to separate—nature or culture—can be imagined without encountering the most transparent evidence of their deep interpenetration. Yet this has been a double transparency: evidence that it is impossible not to see, and evidence that it is impossible not to see through.

¹⁷ Ibid., 12, 34 (emphasis deleted).

¹⁸ See Bruno Latour, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*, trans. Steve Woolgar (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 1979); Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Bruno Latour, *Aramis, or The Love of Technology*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); and Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹⁹ Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 1.

Latour frames his consideration of dualism as a response to a decidedly modern problematic. Jacques Derrida approached dualist thinking in quite a different mode. Derrida worked to explicate the ways in which a range of binary oppositions (being and becoming, speech and writing, reality and appearance, and so on) has provided the foundation for the Western philosophical tradition, the very condition of possibility of onto-theology.²⁰ Derrida's deconstructive project utilized a practice of close reading, seeking the blind spots, the points of rupture or undecidability within texts, in order to demonstrate the essential instability of the binaries on which the texts are built. Derrida began with a basic analysis of the nature of signification and then moved rapidly toward more comprehensive destabilization of human identity and meaning. Simon Critchley has argued that the goal of deconstruction is to identify "an otherness within philosophical or logocentric conceptuality" and then "to deconstruct this conceptuality from that position of alterity."²¹ Onto-theology has always sought to surmount alterity, to assimilate the other into—or into a relation of submission to—the same. In contrast, while Derrida asserts that it is impossible to move outside the binary frame of onto-theology, he repeatedly gestures beyond logocentrism toward the possibility of exteriority. As Critchley states it, these gestures demonstrate a "desire to keep open a dimension of alterity which can neither be reduced, comprehended nor, strictly speaking, even thought by philosophy."²² The very possibility of alterity serves to rattle onto-theological stasis and self-assurance.

Though Derrida was a very subtle writer, he utilized a recurring set of logistical maneuvers in his encounters with dualist structures. The first step of his basic double movement is to invert the terms of a binary (most famously in his valorization of writing over speech), a process that can have illuminating disruptive effects. Through this maneuver Derrida works "to transvalue the structure of values" on which the binary rests in order to uncover the interests underlying those values.²³ Derrida then turns to demonstrate how the poles of a binary are essentially interimplicated, how each term of a dualism is haunted by the trace of its opposite. Western philosophical dualisms have commonly functioned through the formulation of differentiation in which one term is subordinated or suppressed (something

²⁰ See Grace M. Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 8.

²¹ Simon Critchley, "The Chiasmus: Levinas, Derrida and the Ethical Demand for Deconstruction," *Textual Practice* 3(1) (1989): 94.

²² *Ibid.*, 95.

²³ Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 62; see also Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982).

that can be seen even in complementary or dialectical dualisms). Yet, as Derrida states:

binary thought depends more or less secretly on the terms it subordinates in its foundational oppositions.... What one tries to keep outside inhabits the inside and there would be no inside without that fact. There is in this situation an irreducible duplicity...²⁴

Moving through a vast range of texts, from classical philosophy through structuralist linguistics and on to his philosophical contemporaries, Derrida sought to excavate the ways in which each term of a dualism always retains the trace of its opposite.

These deconstructive strategies are explicit in Derrida's readings of Emmanuel Levinas, a thinker with whom Derrida had a deep personal and intellectual affinity. Levinas's challenge to the Western onto-theological tradition was framed as a move beyond the ontological to the ethical, and central to his work was the theme of radical alterity. Levinas argued that the encounter with the radically other draws human consciousness out from self-absorption into a mode of ethical responsibility and that this ethical perspective, in turn, transcends the relatively inconsequential preoccupations of ontology.²⁵ In his various reflections on this theme, Levinas posed a mobile chain of signifiers assuming the role of radical alterity. It can appear as the specific face of another human being, or as a more generalized notion of human difference, or as a realization of the reality of death, or as the intimation of the divine. Levinas sought to challenge the stasis and stability of ontology with a prospect of radical difference, invoking this sense of alterity to formulate, in Derrida's words, an "ethical relationship—a non-violent relationship to the infinite as infinitely other, to the Other—as the

²⁴ Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 217.

²⁵ See, for example, Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990); Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being: Or Beyond Essence* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998); Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous: Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Emmanuel Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Emmanuel Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). See also Seán Hand, ed., *Facing the Other: The Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas* (Richmond, England: Curzon Press, 1996); and Michael Purcell, *Levinas and Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

only one capable of opening the space of transcendence and of liberating metaphysics.”²⁶

Derrida was quite sympathetic to Levinas’s efforts to challenge Western onto-theology, and he returned to think with Levinas repeatedly in a series of texts revolving around the problematic of identity and difference, the same and the other, and—by implication—immanence and transcendence.²⁷ Derrida sought to eliminate the provocation of Levinas’s work, its capacity to point beyond metaphysics toward a broader general economy of difference.

The most marked difference in inflection between Derrida and Levinas comes in Derrida’s more explicit attentiveness to the necessity that alterity must always be reinscribed within the language of onto-theology, that any concept of difference inevitably carries within it the concept of identity. Derrida saw Levinas as overly optimistic about the ability of the other to rattle the strictures of the logos. In Derrida’s view, the other can only come into consciousness through a conceptual framework constituted by the same. Derrida praised Levinas for formulating so incisively the question of radical alterity, but then moved to demonstrate that just as difference is inevitably intertraced with identity—there is no “other” that is not always already being comprehended in terms of the “same”—so also the very notion of identity is itself always already interpenetrated by the notion of difference—there can be no sense of the “same” without a notion of the “other” already in play. As Derrida stated in his essay “Violence and Metaphysics”:

²⁶ Jacques Derrida, “The Violence of Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 79–153, particularly 83.

²⁷ See *ibid.*, 79–153; Jacques Derrida, “At This Very Moment In This Work Here I Am,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley, trans. Simon Critchley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 11–48; and Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). For detailed consideration of the development of the relation between Derrida and Levinas and the reflection of this development in their exchange of texts, see Bernasconi and Critchley, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, xi–xviii; Robert Bernasconi, “Skepticism in the Face of Philosophy,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, 149–61; Simon Critchley, “Bois’—Derrida’s Final Word on Levinas,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, 162–89; Robert Bernasconi, “The Trace of Levinas in Derrida,” in *Derrida and Différance*, ed. David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 13–29; Robert Bernasconi, “Levinas and Derrida: The Question of the Closure of Metaphysics,” in *Face to Face With Levinas*, ed. Richard A. Cohen (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986), 181–202; and Seán Hand, “Introduction to ‘God and Philosophy,’” in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 166–67. See also Levinas’s 1973 essay offering a deconstructive read of Derrida, “Wholly Otherwise,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, trans. Simon Critchley, 3–10.

the expression “infinitely other” or “absolutely other” cannot be stated and thought simultaneously...the other cannot be absolutely exterior to the same without ceasing to be other...consequently, the same is not a totality closed in upon itself, an identity playing with itself, having only the appearance of alterity...the other is absolutely other only if he is an ego, that is, in a certain way, if he is the same as I.²⁸

Through his readings of Levinas, Derrida engaged in an extended double gesture in which he sought to show that Levinas remained caught within the language of traditional ontology and yet pointed beyond that language toward a broader economy of absolute difference. The other will arrive, and yet can arrive only within a conceptual and linguistic grid where repetition and difference—the conditions that make cognition possible—already require—and contain—alterity: “in the same language, the language of the same, one may always ill receive what is thus otherwise said.”²⁹

Many commentators have pointed to the relation between Derrida and Levinas as illuminating the deep ethical orientation directing Derrida’s deconstructive enterprise, an ethic turning on the imperative of response to difference, to the singular other.³⁰ Derrida himself spoke in quite comparable terms about his desire to cultivate responsibility in the face of alterity:

Deconstruction is always deeply concerned with the *other* of language. I never cease to be surprised by critics who see my work as a declaration that there is nothing beyond language, that we are imprisoned in language; it is, in fact, saying the exact opposite. The critique of logocentrism is above all else the search for the *other* and the *other of language*.³¹

Logocentrism claims an illusory self-containment and stasis; deconstruction aims to destabilize those pretensions by pointing to the traces of radical difference always in play. Derrida saw Levinas as prone to conceptualizing the other in a manner that could too readily assume a stable face of domesticated alterity. Derrida sought to gesture instead to a more unimaginable founding alterity, an other that comes to us, as Derrida stated it, in “the species of the nonspecies, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity.”³² This radical other is unthinkable and unthought.

The notion of difference has commonly come into philosophical discourse through the stabilizing, domesticating mode of dualistic rhetoric, the

²⁸ Derrida, “The Violence of Metaphysics,” 126–27.

²⁹ Derrida, “At This Very Moment,” 12.

³⁰ See, for example, Critchley, “The Chiasmus,” 99–100, 102–3.

³¹ Jacques Derrida and Richard Kearney, “Deconstruction and the Other,” in *Debates in Continental Philosophy: Conversations with Contemporary Thinkers*, ed. Richard Kearney (New York: Fordham University Press, 1984), 139–56, 154 (emphasis in original).

³² Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 293.

same and the other. In order even to gesture toward the possibility of a radical alterity, Derrida sought to disrupt the stasis of onto-theological dualisms by pointing toward their conditions of possibility, the radical alterity underlying all signification. As Paul de Man argued, Derrida's deconstructive strategy represents "the unmaking of a construct" by displaying the contingent inner logic through which it operates, but at the same time this strategy is aimed at opening new possibilities: "deconstruction implies the possibility of rebuilding."³³ It is this preoccupation with the impossible possibility of alterity that has made Derrida's work so valuable to contemporary critical thought, particularly that of feminist and postcolonial scholars. Gayatri Spivak, for example, has argued that Derrida's attentiveness to "the danger of appropriating the other by assimilation" makes him an extremely useful ally in her efforts to respond to the legacies of colonialism.³⁴

Derrida's attentiveness to the theme of radical alterity and his subtle reflections on the interplay between the terms of dualisms such as identity and difference, immanence and transcendence, has proved deeply stimulating to a number of contemporary religious thinkers, particularly in Britain and the United States.³⁵ These concerns also led him in his final years to an explicit focus on religious themes.³⁶ As he explained, the great challenge for reli-

³³ See Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 62.

³⁴ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 308. On the issue of feminism, see particularly Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); and Ellen K. Feder, Mary C. Rawlinson, and Emily Zakin, eds., *Derrida and Feminism: Recasting the Question of Woman* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

³⁵ See, for example, Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology, and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Harold Coward and Toby Foshay, eds., *Derrida and Negative Theology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992); John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion Without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Graham Ward, ed., *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); Phillip Blond, ed., *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology* (London: Routledge, 1998); John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, eds., *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*; Merold Westphal, ed., *Postmodern Philosophy and Christian Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); John D. Caputo, *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Clayton Crockett, ed., *Secular Theology: American Radical Theological Thought* (London: Routledge, 2001); Graham Ward, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), particularly 467–516; Richard Kearney, *The God Who May Be: A Hermeneutics of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); and Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters* (London: Routledge, 2003).

³⁶ See for example, Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, eds., *Religion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); and various texts collected in Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002).

gious thought in the present age is to envision alterity as “the opening to the future or to the coming of the other as the advent of justice, but without horizon of expectation and without prophetic pre-figuration.”³⁷ In his approach to dualist thought, Derrida indicated that it is simultaneously impossible and essential to move beyond the strictures of dualism, that while we must move within the binary of immanence and transcendence, we must also struggle to displace both terms and to imagine other possibilities. I return to this issue below, but first let me turn to a third recent continental response to dualist thinking, that can be found in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

“Deconstructive strategies,” says Brian Massumi, “are of great important in demonstrating the limits of oppositional difference. Deconstruction, however, does not allow for the possibility of a positive...description of nonbinary modes of differentiation.”³⁸ Massumi finds this positive potentiality in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. In their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project, Deleuze and Guattari launched a sustained attack against the limitations and constraints of dualist thought and binary logics.³⁹ In these texts—and particularly in the sprawling structure of their writing—these thinkers aimed not to set out a stable philosophical system, what they called a “root-book.” Instead they sought to model the possibilities for new ways of thinking, what they identify as multiplicity: “All we talk about are multiplicities, lines, strata and segmentarities, lines of flight and intensities, machinic assemblages and their various types, bodies without organs and their construction and selection....”⁴⁰ As Fredric Jameson explains, Deleuze and Guattari configure linkages among an astonishing array of themes (“linguistics, economics, military strategy, the building of the cathedrals, mathematics, modern art, kinship systems, technology and engineering, the history of the great classical empires, optics, evolutionary theory, revolutionary praxis, musical modes, the structure of crystals, fascism, sexuality, the

³⁷ See Jacques Derrida, “Faith and Knowledge,” in *Religion*, ed. Derrida and Vattimo, 1–78, particularly 17.

³⁸ Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 178, n. 74.

³⁹ See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). See also Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Nomadology: The War Machine*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Semiotext(e), 1986).

⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 4–5. See also in this regard the essays collected in Félix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1984); Félix Guattari, *Chaosophy*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1995); and other texts collected in Félix Guattari, *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Genosko (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

modern novel”) in order to formulate a startling new vision: “the setting in motion and the systematic rotation of an unimaginably multidimensional reality.”⁴¹

Deleuze built his career with a powerful set of studies of major figures in the Western philosophical and literary canons.⁴² These texts centered on thinkers he saw as providing openings for a new mode of thought. One of the principal targets of Deleuze’s critique was the limitation of dualist thinking. In the opening pages of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari pointedly denounce dualist thought—“the One that becomes two”—arguing that even in its most radical or dialectical inflections, dualism remains “the most classical and well reflected, oldest, and weariest kind of thought.”⁴³ Dualism suppresses possibility by channeling diversity into narrowly prescribed binarisms. Every aspect of this mode of conceptualization is debilitating, yet dualist thought and binary logic have dominated such diverse disciplines as psychoanalysis, linguistics, structuralism, even the information sciences. Undergirding all the various types of dualism one always finds lurking a desire to contain possibility, “a spiritual method” that seeks to impose a stable coherence, the presupposition and enforcement of “a strong principal unity.”⁴⁴

It is the very unity that seems always to underlie dualism that Deleuze and Guattari reject. Aligning themselves with various “abortionists of unity” such as James Joyce and Nietzsche, they propose a radically divergent mode of thought. The first step in breaking free from the thrall of dualism is simply to open our eyes to the multiplicity of the natural world, a multiplicity that defies binarism. As they state, “nature doesn’t work that way: in nature, roots are taproots with a more multiple, lateral, and circular system

⁴¹ Fredric Jameson, “Marxism and Dualism,” in *A Deleuzian Century*, ed. Ian Buchanan (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), 13–36, 24.

⁴² See, for example, Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Gilles Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1984); Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988); Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988); Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992); Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

⁴³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

of ramification, rather than a dichotomous one. Thought lags behind nature.”⁴⁵ Instead of the root-book—the stable arborescent tree where all growth is fashioned around a central organizing core—they pose a very different metaphor for thought, the rhizomatic “radicle-system, or fascicular root.”⁴⁶

The rhizome offers Deleuze and Guattari a potent metaphor in their efforts to displace the narrow and well-worn paths of binary logic. First, rhizomes embody principles of heterogeneity and complex interconnection—“any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be”; rhizomes ceaselessly produce chaotic and startling links among disparate elements.⁴⁷ Similarly, rhizomes display the principles of multiplicity and asignifying rupture: “A multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature.”⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari explain the principal characteristics of the rhizome as follows:

unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states.... It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion.... The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, off-shoots.... In contrast to centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton, defined solely by a circulation of states. What is at question in the rhizome is a relation to sexuality—but also to the animal, the vegetal, the world, politics, the book, things natural and artificial—that is totally different from the arborescent relation: all manner of “becomings.”⁴⁹

Two interrelated modes of thought have dominated Western philosophy: the arborescent fixity of the verb “to be” (the primary trope of ontology), and the disjunctive, binary logic of “either/or” (which still imposes a dualistic coherence). But in contrast to these delimiting alternatives, Deleuze and Guattari propose a radically different logic of conjunctive possibility: “and...and...and.”⁵⁰ This type of conjunctive logic fosters the proliferation of new alternatives, a movement in, among, and through options. Affirming this conjunctive scheme, “a logic of the AND,” enables us to “overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and be-

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5–6. See also John Rajchman, *The Deleuze Connections* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 50–76.

⁴⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 7.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 8–9.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 22.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 25.

gin-nings.”⁵¹ As Brian Massumi explains, the problem that Deleuze and Guattari see at the core of dualistic thought is that its aim is “always to take a *both/and* and make it an *either/or*, to reduce the complexity of pragmatic ethical choice to the black or white of Good or Bad, to reduce the complications of desire as becoming to the simplicity of mind or body, Heaven or Hell. The world rarely obliges.”⁵² Recognizing the proliferating abundance of the world, the novel possibilities for interconnection and movement, is both conceptually gratifying as a more vibrant intellectual vision and also profoundly liberating in opening new trajectories for action.

Through *A Thousand Plateaus* and their other texts, Deleuze and Guattari mine the resources to be found in Western thought for combating dualism, as they seek to explode the pretensions of dualistic thought and binary logic. They work to disrupt the sexual binarism (“to each its own sexes” they famously declare⁵³), the dualism between expression and content (though a literary style that seeks to produce the very effects it describes), and even the most elementary presuppositions of linear causality (by refocusing the reader within a multidimensional conceptual frame). Through all these interrelated gestures, they seek to point us toward the potential for thinking otherwise, for formulating new and unimagined interconnections, for recognizing that we never face just two alternatives but instead a proliferating and multifarious range of possibilities.

One of the profound effects of this conjunctive analytic is to undercut the hierarchies that have dominated the Western philosophical tradition. No dualist hierarchy seems more insidious to Deleuze and Guattari than that of immanence and transcendence. As they cryptically declare in *A Thousand Plateaus*: “Transcendence: a specifically European disease.”⁵⁴ The fundamental problem they see with the notion of transcendence is that it functions as a type of overcoding, a conceptual overlay that imposes a sense of stable essence onto the proliferating multiplicities and intensities of materiality. As Massumi explains, the very notion of transcendence

lifts bodies out of the uniqueness of the spatiotemporal coordinates through which they move. It abstracts them, extracts from them a system of identity...[it] imposes upon them conformity to the system, demands that they live up to its abstraction,

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 112.

⁵³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 296. See also in this regard Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 275–79; 469–73; and Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 86–92.

⁵⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 18. See also Gilles Deleuze, “Plato, The Greeks,” in *Essays Critical and Cultural*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 136–37; and Manuel DeLanda, “Immanence and Transcendence in the Genesis of Form,” in *A Deleuzian Century*, ed. Ian Buchanan, 119–34.

embody its glory. It disregards what is most intimate to bodies, their singular way of decaying, their tendency to escape not only from molar constraint but from themselves.... Their very corporeality is stripped from them, in favor of a supposed substrate—soul, subjectivity, personality, identity—which in fact is no foundation at all, but an end effect, the infolding of a forcibly regularized outside. Transcendence is the glorification of habit.⁵⁵

Whatever the specific nature of this transcendental overcoding—talk of the divine, or the soul, or essences—it serves to undercut material actuality, valorizing abstractions while suppressing lived particularity. For Deleuze and Guattari, immanence is the proper realm of philosophy, while transcendence, “vertical Being,” is the ethereal realm of religion.⁵⁶

In contrast to the type of overcoding—even alienation—that talk of transcendence seems always to represent, Deleuze and Guattari seek to refocus us to recognize the profound and creative immanence characterizing human existence and the world of which it is a part. As Deleuze states in his essay entitled “Immanence: A Life”:

Immanence is not related to Some Thing as a unity superior to all things or to a Subject as an act that brings about a synthesis of things: it is only when immanence is no longer immanence to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence...

We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanence that is in nothing is itself a life. A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence: it is complete power, complete bliss.⁵⁷

Talk of transcendence always deflects our focus into some static realm of essences and illusory unity. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari would have us focus on the tangible, mobile, and superabundant actualities and differences at play within immanent human existence.⁵⁸

This rapid summary of Deleuze and Guattari raises many significant questions concerning the prospects for rethinking binary logic, but for purposes of this essay let me simply focus on one aspect that seems particularly salient. The *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project offers a powerful and creative attack on dualist thought, but these texts themselves are organized through a series of contrasts (between the arborescent tree and the rhizome and then between various cognates of this initial contrast—fascism and revolution, the state and the nomad, the molar and the molecular). Do we

⁵⁵ Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 112.

⁵⁶ See in this regard Keith Ansell Pearson, “Pure Reserve: Deleuze, Philosophy, and Immanence,” in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. Mary Bryden (London: Routledge, 2001), 141–55.

⁵⁷ Gilles Deleuze, “Immanence: A Life,” in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 27.

⁵⁸ See Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 152–56.

have even within the very structure of Deleuze and Guattari's attack on dualism the reinscription of a new system of binaries? This is an important question, one that goes to the heart of whether any scheme, even one as provocative as that of Deleuze and Guattari, can successfully escape the strictures of dualism.

In asking this very question of Deleuze and Guattari, Fredric Jameson points out that their drive toward a monistic sense of immanence depends on a fundamental conceptual opposition between monism and dualism. As Jameson explains:

Dualism is, I believe the strong form of ideology as such, which may of course disguise its dual structure under any number of complicated substitutions. This is so...because it is the ultimate form of the ethical binary, which is thus always secretly at work with ideology.... What the ethical binary now means for other kinds of dualism is that it always tempts us to reinsert the good/evil axis into conceptual areas supposed to be free of it, and to call for judgment where none is appropriate.⁵⁹

In Jameson's view, dualism is the principal form of the ethical binary, central to the process of ethical judgment and therefore often politically salutary. But since dualism always conveys a complex set of "ethical solicitations," it often carries ethical valuation over into conceptual areas where such valuation is inappropriate.⁶⁰ The very type of conceptual and political solicitation at the heart of Deleuze and Guattari's work seems to reinscribe a network of dualisms, even if this binary scheme of valuation sometimes runs counter to their stated objectives.

In fact, Deleuze and Guattari seek to dispel the impression that they are creating a new dualistic opposition in their opposition to dualism. They believe that meaningful judgment and valuation can take place outside of binary logic. As they state it:

there is no dualism, no ontological dualism between here and there, no axiological dualism between good and bad...there are knots of arborescence in rhizomes and rhizomatic offshoots in roots...the root-tree and canal-rhizome are not two opposed models: the first operates as a transcendent model and tracing, even if it engenders its own escapes; the second operates as an immanent process that overturns the model and outlines a map.⁶¹

Instead of a new dualistic scheme, they seek to pose a strategic opposition:

No this is not a new or different dualism. The problem of writing: in order to designate something exactly, an exact expressions are utterly unavoidable.... We invoke one dualism only in order to challenge another. We employ a dualism of models only

⁵⁹ Jameson, "Marxism and Dualism in Deleuze," 31–32.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 20.

in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models. Each time, mental correctives are necessary to undo the dualisms we had no wish to construct but through which we pass.⁶²

The residue of binarism in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* would thus appear to be a type of strategic dualism produced largely by the necessities of representation. As Jameson suggests, this residue leaves open the question whether post-ideological oppositions, oppositions that do not subtly invoke the ethical binary, are imaginable and, if so, what form such oppositions might take. Even if Deleuze and Guattari do not succeed in their effort to move beyond binary logic, Jameson states, the residual dualism haunting their work might be both the pretext and occasion for “the very ‘overcoming’ of Deleuzian thought itself and its transformation into something else.”⁶³ Jameson’s primary concern here is to imagine a conceptual basis for transformative politics outside the strictures of dualism, but the broader question is whether a radically conjunctive logic of multiplicities is conceivable, whether it empowers or whether it paralyzes through the very type of oversaturation to which Paul Feyerabend alluded. In the face of such queries, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that discernment, judgment, and action can take place even within a radical immanence intent on surmounting all binaries.

With these various challenges to dualistic thought in play, let me return to the two guiding questions I raised earlier. The first asked why challenges to dualism are so pervasive within contemporary critical thought. I have focused on a rather narrow set of thinkers, but this trend is pervasive among theorists across a range of academic disciplines. As many commentators have pointed out, the answer is to be found in the social and intellectual structures of late modern society. Latour argues that forms of hybridity long masked by the binary ideology of modernity have become increasingly pervasive and undeniable.⁶⁴ Cultural pluralism, postcolonialism, even the rhizome-like spread of capitalism itself, all coalesce to make rigid dualistic thinking less and less viable. One of the defining aspects of contemporary culture is the acceleration of communications technologies destabilizing all systems of knowledge with newly transparent regimes of mediation. Mark C. Taylor has framed our era as “the moment of complexity,” and, he concludes, dualism is a woefully inadequate mode of thought to comprehend the proliferation of interconnected informational multiplicities.⁶⁵ Even as

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Jameson, “Marxism and Dualism in Deleuze,” 34.

⁶⁴ Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 10, 30, 142–45.

⁶⁵ See Mark C. Taylor, *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture*, new ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

authoritarian political leaders revert to dualistic configurations of the world—good or evil, with us or against us—realities have a way of confounding those simplistic expectations. While there have long been important challenges to dualism in Western philosophy, the accelerating effects of material and intellectual change in late modern culture give contemporary efforts to move beyond dualism far greater cultural traction.

Second, then, what implications might these challenges to dualism have for contemporary religious thought, particularly in regard to the central religious binary of immanence and transcendence? Each of the thinkers I have discussed deals explicitly with the problematic of transcendence, and each offers a distinctive response.

Bruno Latour directs us to abandon the extreme modernist bifurcation of immanence and transcendence. Despite the fervor with which modernity has sought to separate and police the poles of its founding binaries, mediation has always been in play. This mediation is most readily apparent in the production of hybrids undercutting the foundational modern binary of nature and culture. Our world is a complex web of mediations and translations between materiality and social formations and effects. Even the very language of this illusory binary must be pluralized: as we see through the illusion of stable and fixed nature and culture, we can come to recognize that we live in the midst of mobile and various “natures” and “cultures”, which are themselves relative products of history.⁶⁶

In this context, though, we are not deprived of meaning and possibility. Instead, Latour says, “transcendences abound”—note the plural.⁶⁷ As we recognize the multiple layers of interrelation and intercausality, the manifold processes, movements, and passages that shape and transform our world, we can move from a static “metaphysics” devoted to hypothesizing stable essences to what Latour calls an “infra-physics.” In this new infra-physics, our concepts of immanence and transcendence are transformed. No longer do we operate within a fixed binary; instead we come to recognize a new mode of transcendence, a realm of mediation and possibility without a contrary or binary opposite.

Latour labels this new sense of transcendence, one without an opposing term, as a form of “delegation.” Delegation signals the transmission of messages, passage, and movement. As we acknowledge a world filled with a complex network of agents and actants, multiple forces “as transcendent, active, agitated, spiritual, as we are,” the sterility of modern disenchantment

⁶⁶ Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 128.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 127–29.

is overcome.⁶⁸ This new vision of the world is no longer modern, because it no longer rests on the harsh network of binaries and dualisms that defined modernity. As Latour explains:

It is this exploration of a transcendence without a contrary that makes our world so very unmodern, with all those nuncios, mediators, delegates, fetishes, machines, figurines, instruments, representatives, angels, lieutenants, spokespersons and cherubim. What sort of world is it that obliges us to take into account, at the same time and in the same breath, the nature of things, technologies, sciences, fictional beings, religions large and small, politics, jurisdictions, economies and unconsciousnesses? Our own, of course. That world ceased to be modern when we replaced all essences with the mediators, delegates and translators that gave them meaning.⁶⁹

In Latour's frame, transcendence is transformed. It is no longer a gesturing beyond the world toward an abstract and ethereal realm of static essence, but instead a recognition of the possibilities for motion and relation within the world, within the very processes of translation and mediation. The secularizing effects of the modern bifurcation of immanence and transcendence fall away in a newly animated network of intercausality.

Derrida responds in a different manner to the issue of transcendence. He argues that it is impossible to think outside the founding onto-theological dualism of immanence and transcendence; the very conditions of conceptuality, even language, compel us to formulate meaning through contrast and difference, and there is no position outside this system of meaning. But these very conditions also mean that the terms of the immanence/transcendence dualism are inherently unstable. Each is always haunted by the trace of its contrary. Both in his consideration of religious themes in the work of Levinas and in his final texts on religion, Derrida sought to demonstrate that all concepts of transcendence and alterity are inevitably inscribed within the language of immanence and the same. Transcendence can assume meaning within the human world only in relation to the systems of meaning and concepts within that world. Any invocation of transcendence that claims to comprehend an alterity beyond the human condition is an illusion.

Yet at the same time, Derrida also seeks to demonstrate that immanence itself never self-contained—it is also always haunted by difference.⁷⁰ Neither term of this binary can be stable or fixed. In this gesture, Derrida points us to imagine the prospect of a radical alterity that intervenes to disrupt the fixity of these terms, a transcendence beyond human comprehension. This

⁶⁸ Ibid., 128. See also Bruno Latour, "Another Take on the Science and Religion Debate," May 2002, <<http://www.ensmp.fr/~latour/articles/article/086.html>> (23 October 2003).

⁶⁹ Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 129.

⁷⁰ See in this regard Graham Ward, "Introduction, or, A Guide to Theological Thinking in Cyberspace" in *The Postmodern God*, xv–xlvii, particularly xli.

mode of alterity constitutes a “messianicity without messianism,” one that evades all theological pretensions to comprehend the divine.⁷¹ As Derrida explains:

This would be the opening to the future or to the coming of the other as the advent of justice, but without horizon of expectation and without prophetic prefiguration. The coming of the other can only emerge as a singular event when no anticipation sees it coming, when the other and death—and radical evil—can come as a surprise at any moment. Possibilities that both open and can always interrupt history, or at least the *ordinary course* of history.... The messianic exposes itself to absolute surprise.... This messianic dimension does not depend upon any messianism, it follows no determinate revelation, it belongs properly to no Abrahamic religion (even if I am obliged here, “among ourselves”, for essential reasons of language and of place, of culture, of a provisional rhetoric and a historical strategy...to continue giving it names marked by the Abrahamic religions).⁷²

This mode of unthinkable alterity is so far beyond conceptual stability that it can only be imagined in the form of a monstrosity—radical justice, or death, or radical evil. As the very basis for meaning, this form of difference undergirds the provisional stability that human conceptuality can achieve, but it also always stands poised to erupt in ways that can break that stability apart.

These aspects of Derrida’s thought have a profoundly messianic undercurrent, and this undercurrent has led numerous commentators to work within Derrida’s conceptual framework to reflect anew on the nature of difference and transcendence.⁷³ As Derrida states it, “all genuine questioning is summoned by a certain type of eschatology, though it is impossible to define this eschatology in philosophical terms.”⁷⁴ In his texts on religion, Derrida works to provoke such questioning by reformulating the promise and threat of eschatological rupture. He insists on the potency of a monstrously divine alterity to dislodge human pretensions (what John Caputo calls “the shock of alterity, the trauma of transcendence, the blow or coup of the divine”).⁷⁵ But at the same time Derrida insists that this eschatological or messianic rupture as always deferred, always to come, always just

⁷¹ Derrida, “Faith and Knowledge,” 17. See also Derrida and Kearney, “Deconstruction and the Other,” 150.

⁷² Derrida, “Faith and Knowledge,” 17–18 (emphasis in original).

⁷³ See the thinkers mentioned at note 35 above. See also Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, 136–52; Edith Wyschogrod, “Intending Transcendence: Desiring God,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology*, ed. Ward, 348–65; and various essays in James E. Faulconer, ed., *Transcendence in Philosophy and Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

⁷⁴ Derrida and Kearney, “Deconstruction and the Other,” 150.

⁷⁵ See particularly Jacques Derrida, “Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy,” *Semeia* 23 (1982): 94–95; and Caputo, *More Radical Hermeneutics*, 217, 230.

beyond the conceptual horizon. Theology resides in this space between an illusory stability and the radical disruption of the Other.

Unlike Derrida's gesturing toward transcendence, Deleuze and Guattari seek to formulate a new mode of pure immanence, hardly a likely resource for theology. But in fact many contemporary religious thinkers have found useful resources in their work for thinking through traditional theological concepts and dualisms.⁷⁶ Commentators have seen within this mode of radical immanence the opening for a new understanding of the absolute. Keith Ansell Pearson explains the paradox: "Deleuze...is a thinker of the infinite: of infinite movement and of infinite speed precisely because he is a thinker of immanence."⁷⁷ Radical immanence can bring us toward the infinite. But, Pearson asserts, this "enlargement of reality" is not a mode of transcendence, at least not as traditionally configured by theology. Instead this reconfiguration of thought is "an opening up of a field of immanence" more akin to art, which also opens us to the possibilities of experience beyond the senses and prior consciousness.⁷⁸ A philosophy of pure immanence sees nothing beyond or outside immanent reality, and in this frame the focus of ethical inquiry and action shifts away from questions of a transcendent other and onto the realm of immanent difference.⁷⁹

Many religious thinkers see great value in moving away from the harsh modernist bifurcation of immanence and transcendence toward a more immanent notion of the sacred, a reconfiguration of the divine as the mobile horizon of human potentiality.⁸⁰ Walter Lowe, for example, warns against the theological preoccupation with transcendence. As he states, "for Christian theology, any concept of transcendence is found *in the determinate* and remains indissociably linked, not to say bound, to it." Christianity is built, he argues, on "the scandal of particularity."⁸¹ Lowe argues for a new mode of Christian thought that recognizes the importance of the incarnation in calling theology "to stand by determinacy, the concreteness of the crea-

⁷⁶ For recent examples of religious reflection on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, see Bryden, ed., *Deleuze and Religion*; and Charles Winquist, *Desiring Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁷⁷ Pearson, "Pure Reserve," 141.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁷⁹ See Daniel W. Smith, "The Doctrine of Univocity: Deleuze's Ontology of Immanence," in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. Bryden, 167–83, particularly 179.

⁸⁰ See for example Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, 265–75; Luce Irigaray, *An Ethic of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (London: Athlone University Press, 1993), particularly 32–33, 115, 129; Gianni Vattimo, *Belief*, trans. Luca D'Isanto and David Webb (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); and Gianni Vattimo, *After Christianity*, trans. Luca D'Isanto (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

⁸¹ Walter Lowe, "The Bitterness of Cain: (Post)modernity's Flight from Determinacy," in *Postmodern Philosophy and Christian Thought*, ed. Merold Westphal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 109–21, 109 (emphasis in original).

tion.” He seeks in contemporary critical thought the tools “to think finitude from within.”⁸² Perhaps in their turn toward radical immanence, Deleuze and Guattari are not as far as they might appear from a new mode of religious thought, one focused not on an overcoding of transcendence, but on an affirmation of the determinate and the concrete. Perhaps the divine may actually be found within immanent potentiality. At the very least, Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptual framework compels us to recognize the multidimensionality and complexity of reality in ways that inevitably denaturalize any static sense of the immanent.

I will leave the final word to Fredric Jameson, who alludes to important possibilities for a great “utopian transformation” in the efforts of Deleuze and Guattari to overcome dualism. Jameson finds their work still shaped by inescapable elements of dualism, but he sees Deleuze and Guattari as pointing us beyond the “everyday dualist and ethical space” toward a broader conceptual and political economy where stable notions of self and other, immanence and transcendence are surmounted.⁸³ In this gesture, Jameson states, “the unaccustomed voice of great prophecy emerges, in which ethics and ideology, along with dualism itself, are transfigured.”⁸⁴

⁸² Ibid., 118–19. See also Walter Lowe, “Second Thoughts About Transcendence,” in *The Religious*, ed. John D. Caputo (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 241–51, particularly 248–50.

⁸³ Jameson, “Marxism and Dualism,” 32–34.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 34.

William G. Lycan

Recent Naturalistic Dualisms

This paper is about a certain family of philosophical positions on the mind-body problem. The positions are dualist, but only in a minimal sense of that term employed by philosophers: according to the positions in question, mental entities are immaterial and distinct from all physical things.¹ Thus, the positions are united in opposing the monist doctrine of mind-body materialism, roughly that everything mental or psychological is entirely constituted by physical matter.²

I

An Anglo-American philosopher of mind who hears the label “dualism” first thinks of mind-body dualism and Descartes’ doctrine of persons as being immaterial, nonphysical egos or subjects. That doctrine faces daunting objections, and, though it still has a few adherents,³ Cartesian dualism now qualifies as a bugbear. In particular, it is thought to be in deep tension with what is known about biology, chemistry and physics.

According to Descartes, minds are entirely immaterial things, only contingently related to human bodies; indeed, they do not even have spatial properties, for spatial “extension” is what Descartes held to be characteristic of matter. That gives rise to a first objection to his view: it is almost undeniable that the mind interacts causally with the body, but it is also almost impossible to understand how a thing that has no location in physical space could interact causally with things that are so located.⁴ Descartes

¹ Philosophers’ use of the terms “dualist” and “dualism” is local and topical, meaning only that the theorist in question thinks there are two distinct kinds of item in a given domain. The domain need not be all of reality, nor need one of the two kinds dominate the other in any sense, nor are there any normative implications, nor is the term itself pejorative. Philosophical mind-body “dualism” alleges only a *duality*, not a dualism in the sense that primarily concerned the “Light Against Darkness” conference and is elegantly expounded by Professor Fontaine in this volume. (Though, as Randall Styers shrewdly suggested in discussion, mind-body dualism in the philosophers’ sense can assume the aspect of, and even turn into, a dualism in one or another heavier and/or normative sense.)

² Cf. Patrick Miller’s paper in this volume.

³ W.D. Hart, *The Engines of the Soul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); John Foster, *The Immaterial Self* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁴ Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia scored a telling hit against Descartes when he had attempted to solve the interaction problem by comparing mental causation to gravity: though gravitational fields are not physical in the sense that billiard balls are, they are unlike Cartesian egos in being thoroughly spatiotemporal. See Her Highness’ letter from The Hague, June 10–20, 1643.

was well aware of this problem, but confessed that he had no solution to it. (He suggested that the interaction works through the pineal gland⁵ and that the mind has its “main seat” there (346), but he also said that he is “not only lodged in [his] body as a pilot in a vessel, but...[is] so to speak... intermingled” with his whole body (192). “[T]he soul is really joined to the whole body, and...we cannot, properly speaking say that it exists in any one of the parts to the exclusion of the others...” (345). Yet the mind still has “no relation to extension, nor dimensions, nor other properties of the matter of which the body is composed” (345). This was flailing.)⁶

Further problems for Descartes’ dualism are created by more specific scientific facts. One fact often cited is that of evolution by natural selection. It is hard to see how the addition of an immaterial Cartesian ego could have conferred an adaptive advantage on homo sapiens, increasing the reproductive fitness of individuals that had it. (But perhaps this is just to repeat the interaction problem, for if that problem were solved, there would be no further mystery as to how having a mind would be advantageous.)

A worse difficulty is posed by the conservation laws of physics. Descartes knew about the conservation of what he called “quantity of motion” (i.e., mass times speed), which did not exclude the causing of something physical by something purely mental (he seems to have held that the immaterial mind can affect the *direction* of motion without affecting its “quantity”). But it is harder, if not impossible, to reconcile the activity of an alleged Cartesian ego with the more thoroughgoing conservation of physical matter-energy. We can *imagine* or picture in a superficial way that we might look into a normally functioning human brain and discover that the electrical energy coming up the afferent pathways hits the pineal gland and disappears into thin air and that further energy comes from nowhere and activates efferent impulses eventuating in motor responses, but that would contradict everything we think we know about physics and about physiology.⁷

⁵ E. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, eds. and trans., *The Philosophical Works of Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 345–46. The pineal gland was not a bad choice on Descartes’ part, because it is centrally located and even today we know of no other function for the pineal gland; moreover, Descartes thought that a single central location was needed for the uniting of “images” from the various double organs (eyes, ears, hands, etc.). But since the pineal gland is a physical object, Descartes has merely replaced the original mind-body interaction problem with a mind-pineal-gland interaction problem.

⁶ Of course, it is possible to deny that the mind does causally interact with the body, though at horrendous cost in plausibility. For example, Leibniz held that minds and bodies merely run in parallel; there is a “pre-established harmony” engineered by God.

⁷ Further, minds are, unmistakably, in physical time; mental events occur in clear temporal relation to physical events. But physical time is only one of four coequal dimensions of physical spacetime. It is physically impossible for an entity to be in physical time without being in physical space as well.

Finally, given the availability of purely physical explanations for all (nonrandom) physical events including human actions, Cartesian egos are explanatory excrescences. Gilbert Ryle had argued that such entities are not implied even by ordinary talk about the mental.⁸ In light of twenty-first century physics and neuroscience, it seems there is no more reason to believe in Cartesian egos than in ghosts, ectoplasm, or spookstuff of any other sort.⁹

II

Much less unpopular than Cartesian dualism is “property dualism” about the mind. A property dualist need not accept immaterial Cartesian egos, ghost persons, but maintains only that sentient biologic beings have special emergent immaterial or nonphysical *properties* along with their ordinary biological and physical properties. These special properties are of two kinds. One kind is that of the subjectively felt phenomenal qualities of sensations—the vivid color of an after-image, the smell of a smell, what it is like to hear soprano C# as played by Jean-Pierre Rampal, or the achy feel of a particular pain. Such properties, it is argued, are not themselves physical even if they are properties of otherwise physical beings; they could not consist simply in arrangements or configurations of physical stuff.¹⁰

The other kind of special property is the “intentional” kind as Franz Brentano called it,¹¹ the *aboutness* of some mental states such as thoughts, beliefs, and desires. Most remarkably, my thoughts and beliefs can be about nonexistent things, such as Santa Claus and Sherlock Holmes, and just as easily as they can be about real things and people such as the Eiffel Tower and George W. Bush. Brentano argued that purely physical or material

⁸ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949).

⁹ To say this is to suggest that Cartesian dualism is a theory of the mental, to be evaluated on its explanatory merits. That is not how Descartes himself conceived it. He knew very well that, considered as a theory, his dualism was both radical and radically unsatisfactory. Rather, he believed he had proved it to be true by deductive argument. The argument was epistemological, roughly that the mind is better known to its owner than is anything physical, hence the mind cannot be anything physical. A bit more precisely, any belief I have about anything physical can in principle be doubted, but my beliefs about my own present mental states are indubitable, hence my own present mental states are not physical. (These are not sound arguments. Regarding the first, consider the fact that Lois Lane knew and always would know Clark Kent better than she could ever know Superman.)

¹⁰ See, e.g., F. Jackson, *Perception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); F. Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia,” *Philosophical Quarterly* 32 (1982): 127–136.

¹¹ Franz Brentano, *Psychologie vom Empirischen Standpunkt* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1924); see also R.M. Chisholm, *Perceiving* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1957), Ch. 11. The term “intentional” as used here has nothing to do with action or intending to do something; it is from the Latin for *to draw a bow at*.

objects cannot have such intentional properties—for how could any purely physical entity or state have the property of being about or “directed upon” a nonexistent thing?

In eschewing Cartesian egos themselves, property dualism is felt to be more credible than Cartesian dualism. But it is not entirely clear why. Although the property dualist cannot be accused of belief in ghosts, ectoplasm, etc., his or her special emergent properties raise most of the same problems as Cartesian egos. The interaction problem is particularly clear: how are the special emergent properties supposed to interact causally with physical properties? And how is that supposed to be accommodated by the conservation laws?

More interesting than either Cartesian dualism or traditional property dualism is a recent spate of “naturalistic” dualisms, which are my main topic.

III

The idea of “naturalistic” dualism is to respect natural science entirely, denying nothing that is known, rejecting only the classical mechanistic nineteenth-century view according to which nothing fundamentally exists but individual subatomic particles and their dynamic and kinematic properties. According to the naturalistic dualist, the foregoing objections to Cartesian and property dualism are at least tacitly based on the classical view and can be circumvented if we abandon that view.

Naturalistic dualism was inaugurated by Wilfrid Sellars in the 1950s,¹² although the idea did not catch on until thirty or forty years later. Sellars argued (at great length) that the subjectively felt phenomenal qualities of sensations—the first kind of special property mentioned in section II—could not be identified with, otherwise reduced to, or even accommodated within the “punctiform” metaphysics afforded by classical particulate mechanics. He called such subjective qualitative properties “sensa.” But, rather than insisting that sensa are outside physical reality itself, Sellars contended that they will have a home within a suitably expanded physics and so are part of nature after all:

The important thing is not to let our reflections on the developing Scientific Image of man-in-the-world be tied too closely to the current institutional and methodological structure of science, or, above all, to its current categorical structure.... Sensa are not

¹² Wilfrid Sellars, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” in *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. I, ed. H. Feigl and M. Scriven (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956); “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man,” in *Frontiers of Science and Philosophy*, ed. R. Colodny (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962); and “The Identity Approach to the Mind-Body Problem,” *Review of Metaphysics* 18 (1965): 430–51.

“material” as “matter” is construed in the context of a physics with a particulate paradigm. But, then, as has often been pointed out, the more seriously this paradigm is taken, and the more classically it is construed, the less “matter” there seems to be.¹³

As microphysics continues to get weirder, it would be inadvisable to insist on a nineteenth- or even a twentieth-century conception of ultimate matter; it is hardly our place to second-guess the physicists. By the time the mental is actually reduced to anything, physics may well be other than physics as conceived in the 2000s. (Sellars thought of his *sensa* as “pure” or subjectless processes, on the model of *its raining* in a given region. The raining is not the activity of any individual thing or subject, but is merely a process; “It” in “It’s raining” is not a name. Similarly, red after-imaging is going on, or there is painful aching now. And Sellars thought that microphysics would move in the direction of positing pure processes rather than ultimate particles, thereby relieving *sensa* from their tension with the Newtonian particulate paradigm.)

Thus, Sellars proposed that although there are mental properties that are “immaterial” by traditional standards, and classical materialism and physicalism must be rejected, those mental properties can still be accommodated within a wider but still naturalistic and scientific worldview, once we reject the classical picture of microphysics.

Actually, naturalistic dualism comes in grades or degrees, for there are degrees or extents of departure from classical materialism, physicalism, or microphysics itself. (The degrees of departure tend to coincide with degrees of unwillingness to call oneself a dualist despite one’s avowed rejection of classical materialism.) I shall distinguish three such grades.

IV

Weak naturalist dualism tries to account for mental phenomena within the bounds of already known non-classical physics, paradigmatically quantum mechanics. On this view, contra Sellars himself, neither contemporary physics nor our concept of matter will have to change. For example, Michael Lockwood identifies one’s total subjective awareness at a time (what Sellars would say is the totality of one’s *sensa* at that time) with a designated quantum state of one’s brain.¹⁴ Roger Penrose invokes quantum phenomena to explain the possibility of causal interaction between “im-

¹³ Wilfrid Sellars, “Science, Sense Impressions, and *Sensa*: A Reply to Cornman,” *Review of Metaphysics* 24 (1971): 439–40, 446.

¹⁴ Michael Lockwood, *Mind, Brain and the Quantum* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

material” mental properties and physical things, citing the brain as an extraordinarily complex magnifier of quantum micro-effects.¹⁵

I have two general objections to this Weak naturalist sort of appeal to quantum mechanics. The first is that its proponents have made no connection with actual mental phenomena. In particular, nothing about subjective or qualitative properties (the redness of the after-image, the felt quality of the ache, etc.) has been explained or even potentially explained by reference to distinctive quantum effects. Until recently at least, the argument has been essentially that (1) subjective mental phenomena are weird and mysterious, (2) quantum effects are weird and mysterious, and so (3) subjective mental phenomena are quantum effects—which is not very good reasoning. Very recently, a few more specific suggestions have been offered by quantum enthusiasts,¹⁶ but they are still rudimentary and vague; and (much more to the point) it has not been argued that the classical materialist lacks corresponding explanatory resources.

My second objection is that no Weak naturalist author has succeeded in establishing any particular difference between quantum and classical mechanics that does the work of accommodating the mental properties that allegedly cannot be reconciled with classical physics.¹⁷ The Weak naturalist’s idea is that although there are sound dualist arguments to show that some mental properties are immaterial relative to Newtonian matter, those same arguments do not show that the “immaterial” properties are outside of nature. (If there are no arguments of this kind, (a) no one would need to be a mind-body dualist of any sort, and also (b) there would be no occasion for advertent to quantum mechanics.) But I know of no such arguments. That is partly (and degenerately) because I do not believe there are any sound ar-

¹⁵ Roger Penrose, *The Emperor's New Mind* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989). Other quantum enthusiasts include David Hodgson (*The Mind Matters* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991]), Henry Stapp (“Why Classical Mechanics Cannot Accommodate Consciousness But Quantum Mechanics Can,” *Psyche* 25 (1995), <<http://psyche.cs.monash.edu.au/v2/psyche-2-05-stapp.html>>), and David Chalmers (*The Conscious Mind* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996]), though Chalmers holds a more ambitious form of naturalist dualism, to be discussed below. Of course, quantum mechanics is itself dualist as regards mind and body on some of its many interpretations. I have in mind interpretations that appeal to “measurements” that cause collapses of the wavefunction, and which further understand “measurements” in terms of the “consciousness” of an observer taken as primitive. For an informal exposition, see Eugene Wigner, “Remarks on the Mind-Body Question,” in *The Scientist Speculates*, ed. Irving J. Good (London: Heinemann, 1963), 284–302.

¹⁶ Quentin Smith, “Why Cognitive Scientists Cannot Ignore Quantum Mechanics,” in *Consciousness: New Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Quentin Smith and Aleksandar Jokic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), and Michael Lockwood, “Consciousness and the Quantum World: Putting Qualia on the Map,” in the same volume.

¹⁷ An obvious exception would be free will, for those who think that free will is incompatible with Newtonian determinism. But the focus of the literature I am discussing is on sensa and intentional properties, not on free will.

guments for the “immaterial” properties in the first place.¹⁸ When we consider some of the more impressive dualist arguments that have been offered, it is easy to see that *if* they succeed against materialism understood in terms of Newtonian matter, they also succeed against naturalism in the Weak theorist’s broader sense.¹⁹

To take a leading example, Frank Jackson’s much-anthologized “Knowledge Argument” for mind-body dualism runs as follows.²⁰ Consider Mary, a brilliant color scientist who happens herself to be entirely colorblind. She becomes scientifically omniscient as regards the physics and chemistry of color, the neurophysiology of color vision, and every other conceivably relevant scientific fact; we may even suppose that she becomes scientifically omniscient, period. Then she is cured of her colorblindness and actually sees colors for the first time. And she thereby *learns something*, viz., she learns what it is like to see red and many of the other colors. (That is, she learns what it is like to experience *subjective* redness, never mind the actual colors of the physical objects she encounters, which she already knew.) But by hypothesis, she already knew all the relevant scientific facts; so the fact she has now learned, that of what it is like to see red, is not a scientific fact and cannot be captured by science.

What is important about Jackson’s argument for present purposes is that it is entirely neutral as regards what the relevant scientific facts are. It does not care whether they are neurophysiological, chemical, Newtonian, or quantum-mechanical. All that matters is that the facts can be formulated in the public language of some science. What Jackson meant to show was that properties of the form “what it’s like to experience...” are *intrinsically perspectival* and cannot be expressed in any public language at all. The move from classical physics to quantum mechanics would in no way blunt the Knowledge Argument. In fact, if sound, the argument shows that the relevant mental properties cannot be quantum properties.²¹

V

The *Medium-Strength* naturalist dualist denies the usefulness or even the coherence of the standard “material”/“immaterial” or “physical”/“non-

¹⁸ For a catalogue and detailed rebuttals, see my *Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford Books/MIT Press, 1987), and *Consciousness and Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford Books/MIT Press, 1996).

¹⁹ Kirk Ludwig makes a similar point specifically against Stapp, in “Why the Difference Between Quantum and Classical Physics is Irrelevant to the Mind/Body Problem,” *Psyche* 25 (1995), <<http://psyche.cs.monash.edu.au/v2/psyche-2-16-ludwig.html>>.

²⁰ “Epiphenomenal Qualia.”

²¹ For that matter, Descartes’ original epistemological arguments (note 9 above) would similarly be unaffected by the move to quantum mechanics.

physical” distinction, while still cleaving to actual or foreseeable physics. “Physics” may or may not have to change, on this view, but now the concept of matter is up for grabs. The foregoing quotation from Sellars states the view. More recently, Noam Chomsky has defended it:

Newton exorcised the machine, not the ghost: surprisingly, the principles of contact mechanics are false, and it is necessary to invoke what Newton called an “occult quality” to account for the simplest phenomena of nature, a fact that he and other scientists found disturbing and paradoxical...

These moves also deprive us of any determinate notion of body or matter. The world is what it is, period. The domain of the “physical” is nothing other than what we come more or less to understand, and hope to assimilate to the core natural sciences in some way, perhaps by modifying them radically, as has often been necessary.²²

There is no denying that physics persistently encounters new phenomena and innovates in ways that shocks the older generation conceptually: action at a distance; electromagnetism; relativity; Riemannian spacetime; quantum indeterminacy; the paradoxes of quantum mechanics; tachyons; antimatter. It does not stop being physics, and its practitioners do not thereby depart from naturalism.

The Medium-Strength naturalist dualist argues that he or she is a “dualist” only relative to classical mechanics, and that the “material”/“immaterial” distinction is now otiose. But, I object, there is a way of marking the difference between dualism and materialism even allowing for a conceptually expanded physics and without presupposing any tendentious notion of “matter.”²³ Start with a list of all the known mental properties. It would be a long list, including not just Sellars’ *sensa* but things like a desire for a shower, the belief that broccoli will kill you, and embarrassment at having misquoted someone. Now make that list open-ended, by reference to some general features that many mental states and events characteristically have:

²² Noam Chomsky, “Linguistics and Cognitive Science: Problems and Mysteries,” unpublished, 1–2. (A published version of this paper appears in Asa Kasher, ed., *The Chomskian Turn* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), but omitting the section quoted.) For developments of the same idea, see also T. Crane and D.H. Mellor, “There is no Question of Physicalism,” *Mind* 99 (1990): 185–206, and Barbara Montero, “The Body Problem,” *Noûs* 33 (1999): 183–200. It should be noted that Chomsky himself is not a declared dualist even by my minimal standard; he is only making room for such a position. However, a further passage suggests an even stronger stance: “[The terms] ‘body’ and ‘the physical world’ refer to whatever there is, all of which we try to understand as best we can and to integrate into a coherent theoretical system that we call the natural sciences...If it were shown that the properties of the world fall into two disconnected domains, then we would, I suppose, say that that is the nature of the physical world, nothing more, just as if the world of matter and anti-matter were to prove unrelated.” “Linguistics and Cognitive Science,” 38–39.

²³ Originally proposed by Keith Campbell, in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. P. Edwards (London: Macmillan, 1967), 179–188.

sensa or other subjective qualitative properties themselves, and also “intentional” properties (any property that consists in a state’s or event’s being *about* something, such as a thought about chocolate or a belief about the Easter Bunny).²⁴ Then characterize “materialism” as bluntly excluding all such mental properties at the level of fundamental entities. Materialism will then be the claim that any subject of mental properties must be composed solely of basic elements that individually do not have them, and for anything that has a mental property, its doing so must consist entirely in an arrangement of the basic components. That reinstates a clear and nonarbitrary distinction between materialism and mind-body dualism without appeal to any prior understanding of “matter.”

VI

Strong naturalist dualism is even more ambitious, having it that science will eventually itself be forced to recognize new primitives that are not found or even readily foreseeable in physics; a scientific revolution is predicted. Both physics and the concept of matter will have to change. This was Sellars’ view, though he thought that the change, in his case the move to pure processes, was already underway within physics. Strong naturalist dualism has much more recently been defended by, among others, Leopold Stubenberg, David Chalmers, and Galen Strawson.²⁵ Chalmers argues that physics will have to take some “what it’s like” properties as primitives alongside the primitives of quantum mechanics and predicts that laws will be discovered relating the two.

But the Strong naturalist view faces a number of objections. First, there is a problem about disciplinary authority. How might *microphysicists* be moved to posit Sellarsian *sensa* or Chalmers’ “what it’s like” properties? Microphysicists do not study human behavior, or neural processing, or even the dynamics and kinematics of ordinary middle-sized inanimate objects. The proposed revision of physics is not motivated by the physical data that are the microphysicist’s proprietary evidence base. In effect, the physicist is being asked to do the philosopher a favor. For purposes of his philosophy of mind, Sellars needs physics to posit *sensa*. But even if the physicist is tractable and wants to reach out to a colleague across a disciplinary boundary, there is nothing he or she can do *ex officio*. The physicist is being asked to

²⁴ Brentano maintained that “intentionality” or aboutness is the mark of the mental, that all and only mental items have it. (This thesis is quite controversial in each direction. But I agree that all mental items are intentional; see *Consciousness and Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Bradford Books / MIT Press, 1996).)

²⁵ Leopold Stubenberg, *Consciousness and Qualia* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998); David Chalmers, *The Conscious Mind*; and Galen Strawson, “The Self,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 4 (1997): 405–28.

make a departmental commitment that he or she has no departmental authorization for making.

Second, it seems that in any case the details of microphysics should be irrelevant to microphysics. Mental properties are determined by neuroanatomical properties, regardless of what constitutes the latter themselves. Changes in the physics underlying biology and chemistry should not matter in any way to the mind, however much they matter to matter. As John J. C. Smart has put it:

[I]f it be granted that the brain is essentially a nerve net, then physics enters our understanding of the mind by way of the biochemistry and biophysics of neurons. But neurons are, in Feinberg's sense, "ordinary matter." So whatever revolutionary changes occur in physics, there will be no important lesson for the mind-body problem or for the philosophy of biology generally.... The situation is not like that in the eighteenth century, when physics was mainly mechanics, and needed to be supplemented by the theory of electricity and magnetism, even for the purpose of understanding the behaviour of ordinary bulk matter.²⁶

If we were to take a collection of molecules, assumed to have just the properties they are thought to have at present, we could in principle build a version of a human organism whose behavior, including verbal behavior, would be just like ours under appropriately parallel circumstances. Would such a simulacrum not have a mind? *Maybe* not, but we would have every reason to think it did and no reason I can anticipate for denying that.²⁷

Third, the Strong naturalist faces a dilemma. If any reduction of mind to the natural order requires a re-conception and expansion of physics to incorporate novel entities and principles not motivated by the physical data themselves, then either those entities and principles will be localized where we now take minds to be (viz., in central nervous systems) or like other entities and principles of fundamental physics they will pervade nature. But the former hypothesis, while coherent, is unacceptable. Are the new entities and principles just shy? Why would the entities occur and principles apply only in regions of space-time shaped like the heads of sentient creatures or be specific to neural tissue, which regions and tissue are specified only at a

²⁶ John J. C. Smart, "The Content of Physicalism," *Philosophical Quarterly* 28 (1978): 339–41.

²⁷ In "Why Cognitive Scientists Cannot Ignore Quantum Mechanics," Quentin Smith rebuts a similar argument, but not quite this one. I made a related argument against Sellars in *Consciousness*, 103, in terms of the determination of nature's higher levels of organization by its lower ones. Roughly, since molecules are made of atoms, molecular facts are determined by already familiar microphysical facts; biological facts are determined by molecular facts plus ordinary macroscopic surroundings; psychological facts are determined by biological facts plus ordinary macroscopic surroundings; so, given transitivity of determination, psychological facts are determined by microphysical facts of the sort that are already fairly well known.

level of organization far higher than that of microphysics? Why would their occurrence depend on their *so much* larger molecular environment? The notion is imaginable, but grotesque. And again, how could the microphysicist *ex officio* explain why the new entities occur just in the small and idiosyncratically distributed regions of space-time where they do? (Nonetheless, Sellars firmly grasps this “shyness” horn of the dilemma.²⁸)

The second hypothesis, that the new entities and principles will pervade nature, is far more likely, but it encourages panpsychism, indeed is a form of it. If they are posited out of the need to reduce or explain mental phenomena and they occur throughout nature, then so, presumably, do the mental phenomena. Chalmers cautiously defends this position: “[W]her-ever there is a causal interaction, there is information, and wherever there is information, there is experience” (*The Conscious Mind*, 297).

Considered as general metaphysics, panpsychism is hardly a popular choice, and many philosophers would think that for a Strong naturalist to be committed to panpsychism amounts to a *reductio ad absurdum*. But the Strong naturalist’s opponent cannot stop there with a good derisive snort. It is not as though the Strong naturalist has tacitly and unawares been committed to panpsychism; assuming the “shyness” horn of the dilemma has been rejected, the view the Strong naturalist has been defending by direct argument *is* a form of panpsychism. As I have said, I myself respect none of the arguments offered in support of Strong naturalistic dualism,²⁹ but it seems only fair at this stage to give some consideration to panpsychism itself, and see whether it does not deserve to be taken more seriously than it has been in the past century.

VII

Classically, panpsychism has been the view that every individual thing in the universe has mental or psychological properties, an “inner” life. Human beings and animals are not alone in being conscious and/or thinking; plants, stones, drops of water, silicon compounds, molybdenum atoms, and even electrons are and/or do. The doctrine has been attributed, not always reliably, to such figures in the history of philosophy as Anax-

²⁸ Or so he told me in 1979, during the Mini-Conference on Wilfrid Sellars’ Theory of Perception, Ohio State University, when I had pressed the present dilemma upon him and urged that pervasiveness was better than shyness. During lunch at a restaurant later on, Sellars suddenly buttonholed the waiter and (without preamble) exclaimed, “Lycan here thinks stone walls have orgasms!”

²⁹ Against Sellars, chap. 8 of *Consciousness*, sections 5–10; against Chalmers, “Vs. a New A Priorist Argument for Dualism,” in *Philosophical Issues*, Vol. 13, ed. E. Sosa and E. Villanueva (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2003).

imenes, Plotinus, Francis Bacon, Leibniz, Spinoza,³⁰ Schopenhauer, Schelling, and Schiller. The most recent important philosophers to have held or recommended it were Hermann Lotze, Josiah Royce, and Alfred North Whitehead. Lotze wrote: "All motion of matter in space may be explained as a natural expression of the inner states of beings that seek or avoid one another with a feeling of their need.... The whole of the world of sense...is but the veil of an infinite realm of mental life."³¹ Royce: "Where we see inorganic Nature seemingly dead, there is, in fact, conscious life, just as surely as there is any Being present in nature at all."³² Whitehead: Bacon's view that "'all bodies whatsoever, though they have no sense,...yet have perception'...expresses a more fundamental truth than do the materialistic concepts which were then being shaped as adequate for physics."³³

Some distinctions are needed. First, panpsychism is not Idealism, the view that all reality is mental and there are not really any physical objects.³⁴ (It is not clear whether Leibniz' doctrine of monads made him a panpsychist or an Idealist. Lotze and Royce can be interpreted as Idealists as well.) Second, panpsychism is not and does not entail the thesis of a "World Soul," though some panpsychists have accepted the latter thesis also. Third, panpsychism is not equivalent to "hylozoism," the thesis that every individual thing is alive.

Fourth, there is a slightly weaker claim available to Strong naturalist dualists. They may hold not that every single individual thing that exists has mental properties but only that mental properties pervade nature in the same

³⁰ Unless I have missed it, Michael Rosenthal takes no stand on this in his contribution to this volume. There is a passage that reads, "[W]hether we conceive nature under the attribute of Extension, or under the attribute of Thought...we shall find one and the same order, or one and the same connection of causes..." (*Ethics*, in *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, ed. and trans. E. Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1677/1985), Book 2, Prop. 7, scholium; cited by William Seager in "Panpsychism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2001 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2001/-entries/panpsychism/>>. The latter survey article is an excellent guide, as was its predecessor, Paul Edwards' "Panpsychism," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 5, ed. P. Edwards (New York: Macmillan), though I have some disagreements with each.

³¹ Hermann Lotze, *Microcosmus*, vol. I, trans. E. Hamilton and E. E. C. Jones (New York: H. Holt, 1890), 363.

³² Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual*, Second Series (New York: Macmillan, 1901), 240. But it is not clear that Royce extended mentality to the ultimate individual constituents of matter.

³³ Alfred N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1925), 56. But it must be remembered that Whitehead embraced an ontology of pure processes, not of individual things.

³⁴ Notice, incidentally, that panpsychism as defined above does not actually entail dualism; one *could* accept it but also maintain that all mental properties are reducible to physical ones, though I have never heard of anyone's taking that position.

way that quarks, leptons, and their characteristic features do. For example, they might be properties of electrons only; it would not follow that pi-mesons or bosons had mental properties. I shall call this weaker position “Weak panpsychism.”

Attractive as they may have seemed to some, neither panpsychism nor Weak panpsychism is an easy position to defend. Early and unconvincing appeals were made to analogy and to the slippery slope. Perhaps a better try was based on Bertrand Russell’s appeal to the intrinsic natures of unobservables in science.³⁵ Russell pointed out that the unobservable entities studied by physics are known and described in purely relational terms, paradigmatically by their effects. For something to be an electron is just for that thing to do what an electron does. And it seems that scientific method limits us to such relational descriptions; science cannot tell us what an electron is like in itself, its intrinsic nature. Russell further argued that much the same is true of ordinary observable macroscopic physical objects and their properties; prescientifically, we know and describe them ultimately only in terms of their effects on our sensory experience. Indeed, the only type of intrinsic nature we know is that of our sense experience itself, its “what it’s like” properties. Therefore, very likely, the intrinsic natures of subatomic particles and the like are “what it’s like” properties too, and panpsychism follows.³⁶

Two objections can be made against Russell’s argument. What grounds the assumption that the ultimate constituents of the physical world must have intrinsic properties at all? Perhaps the nature of a subatomic particle is exhausted by the totality of its relations to other things. Moreover, even if the “what it’s like” properties featured in sensory experience are the only intrinsic properties that we know directly and subatomic particles do have intrinsic natures, it hardly follows that the particles’ natures are “what it’s like” properties.

A tighter argument for panpsychism is suggested by Thomas Nagel.³⁷ In section II above I spoke of “emergent” properties of things, but as philosophers use that term it has two senses, a weaker and a stronger. In the weaker sense, a property is emergent if it is possessed by a composite thing but not by any of that thing’s parts. For example, none of the parts of a ladder is itself a ladder, so the property of being a ladder is emergent in the weak sense. In the stronger sense, a property is emergent just in case it is emergent in the weaker sense but, in addition, the composite thing’s having it is not simply a matter of the thing’s parts being arranged in a certain way with respect to each other.

³⁵ Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Matter* (London: Kegan Paul, 1927).

³⁶ In *Mind, Brain and the Quantum*, Lockwood makes a version of this argument, though he is a Weak rather than a Strong naturalist dualist.

³⁷ “Panpsychism,” in *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

The property of being a ladder is not emergent in the stronger sense, because for a thing to be a ladder is just for it to have serial rungs that are held together in parallel by longer side pieces.

Many philosophers have opined that emergence in the stronger sense is a metaphysical impossibility, in effect a case of something being created out of nothing. Or, at the very least, sound methodology forbids positing a strongly emergent property when one has any alternative at all. Now suppose further that some mental properties cannot be reduced to physical properties of any sort, so that some version of property dualism is true. But mental properties are properties of composite beings such as ourselves, so if none of our ultimate parts have mental properties, our mental properties are strongly emergent. If strong emergence is impossible, then, it follows that some of our ultimate parts do have mental properties. Assuming that our ultimate parts are subatomic particles, it further follows that at least some of the particles of which we are made have mental properties. But those particles are of exactly the same kinds that pervade the universe; so mental properties pervade it as well.

Of course, this argument simply assumes property dualism, so at best it shows that if one is already a property dualist on independent grounds, one should be a panpsychist (at least a Weak one) as well. But the argument can be resisted even by the property dualist. He or she need not grant the assumption that our ultimate parts are subatomic particles. (Sellars's argument for his *sensa* is an anti-emergence argument of just this sort; he argues that *sensa* are ultimate constituents of sentient beings.) Additionally, not everyone is so put off by the strong notion of emergence. Charlie D. Broad, for example, defended a strong emergentism at length.³⁸

The case for panpsychism is not strong. I turn to the case against.

VIII

Panpsychism's most obvious liability is the absence of scientific evidence. There is no scientific reason, as opposed to the foregoing philosophical arguments, for believing it, and it is a scientific claim. Recall the "disciplinary authority" problem for Strong naturalist dualism: if molybdenum atoms have mental properties, that is for the microphysicist to find out. If microphysics has no need of the panpsychist hypothesis, we should apply Occam's Razor.

The premise would be contested by certain interpreters of quantum mechanics (cf. note 15 above) who maintain that in order for there to be determinate physical facts in spatiotemporal region R, there is consciousness in R. And of course it is possible that such an interpretation might gain favor, so the present objection is hardly fatal. I would rejoin, though, that the interpretations in question are just that, interpretations of the quantum facts, not facts them-

³⁸ Charlie D. Broad, *The Mind and Its Place in Nature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925).

selves, and the interpretation of quantum mechanics is considerably affected by philosophical considerations.

A more worrying difficulty for the panpsychist is the threat of epiphenomenalism. Because of the causal closure of physics, the panpsychist's tiny mental properties could play no causal role. That is, since every nonrandom physical event has a sufficient physical cause, there is no work for the mental properties to do. They are brought into existence only to do nothing at all.

The latter conclusion is not inevitable. One could insist that some or all physical events are causally overdetermined, each one having both a sufficient physical cause and a sufficient or contributing mental cause. Perhaps there is a kind of mental-physical parallel in the world's causal structure. The suggestion is *ad hoc*; different theorists will rate its plausibility differently.

For that matter, some panpsychists may not care if their mental properties are epiphenomenal or indeed even see that as an objection. Assuming that there is a good reason for belief in epiphenomenal mental properties, then we should believe in epiphenomenal mental properties. But it is not quite so easy. Epiphenomenalism would reinforce the "absence of evidence" objection by making it *a priori*: if the panpsychist's mental properties do not cause anything, how could they bring themselves to our attention? How could we possibly have scientific evidence of their existence?

A further difficulty for panpsychism generally is raised by Nagel's anti-emergence argument. The mental properties we all know about are of course properties of complex organisms such as ourselves. If the anti-emergence argument is sound, those properties must be a function of the mental properties inhering in their subjects' ultimate components. How could that be? The question is bonafide, not rhetorical, for I know of no proof that my mental life could not be a function of the mental lives of my ultimate components, assuming *arguendo* that such exist. But it is hard to imagine. Suppose I am now simultaneously seeing a computer screen, feeling typing impacts on the tips of my fingers, hearing the slight whine of the air conditioner, suffering an ache in my left knee, hoping I will finish this paper before I leave the office today, and wanting a large gin and tonic. In what way could such a mental aggregate consist of a host of smaller mentations? Is it that some of my ultimate components are experiencing some of those very same mental states, and when enough of them do, I myself do? Or are the mental states of my components little, primitive states that somehow together add up to macroscopic states such as the ones I am in? (Note that the anti-emergentist would have to worry about strong emergence here.) Either alternative is hard to imagine, as is any further alternative.³⁹

³⁹ This objection need not bother the panpsychist who makes no appeal to the anti-emergence argument. For such a person is free to reject the idea that my mentation is a function of the mental

Finally, if every individual thing has mental properties, what sorts of mental properties in particular do the smallest things have? It seems ludicrous to think that a molybdenum atom has either sensory experiences or intentional states. How could it see, hear, or smell anything? What would be the contents of its beliefs or desires? (Perhaps it wishes it were a silver atom.)

I close with a suggestion for the panpsychist that will help alleviate the last problem. To say that the universe is suffused with mind is not to say that it is suffused with minds like ours. The mentation exhibited by inanimate things might, as Chalmers suggests, be rudimentary. Indeed, it might be minimal in a special way; it might be “pure” consciousness in the sense attributed to Buddhists and some Hindus. Reportedly,⁴⁰ adepts can meditate themselves into a state of consciousness that is objectless, with no particular content. Perhaps, if panpsychism is true, that “pure” consciousness is the sort of mentation that electrons or molybdenum atoms have. That would nicely distinguish them and other inanimate things from those of us whose consciousness is contentful and would release the panpsychist from having to wonder what molybdenum atoms feel or think about.⁴¹

Now I do not understand the idea of consciousness without content. And it would be a counterexample to Brentano’s thesis that all mental states are intentional (cf. note 24 above). But no wonder. The defenses of “pure” consciousness that I have heard rest on testimony about testimony of those who have themselves experienced the special meditative states. And that is where, or past where, Anglo-American philosophy of mind leaves off.

There would still be an emergence issue, this time about *content*. If my ultimate components are conscious but only objectlessly so, how then do my own mental states have intentional objects? But perhaps intentionality is easier to reduce to the physical than is consciousness.

As is probably obvious, I am no fan of dualism of any sort. But I have tried to explore the best way of being a mind-body dualist, and argued cumulatively that the best option is probably to be a Weak panpsychist. I only hope I have made no converts.

states of my components, and can suppose it is unrelated. That suggests the zany possibility that various parts of my body, such as my right foot, my upper teeth, the small of my back, or my right forearm, wrist and hand are all experiencing distinct and unrelated mental lives. Chalmers takes much this position, though with a few qualifications, one of which is that very simple systems would have very simple phenomenology or protophenomenology, so simple that they would fall short of having what we usually think of as minds (*The Conscious Mind*, 298–99).

⁴⁰ Everything I know about such consciousness I have been told by Jonathan Shear.

⁴¹ As a side issue, the object of meditating and presumably that of achieving “pure” consciousness is psychological and/or spiritual benefit. Pure consciousness is good for you. So if molybdenum atoms have pure and only pure consciousness, they are probably quite happy as they are.

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² In general, the editors have attempted to limit entries to those thinkers that are most obviously associated with the idea of Dualism. Thus, the list includes more philosophers and theorists than historians and philologists. We hope to have created a more efficient tool for readers.

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